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IMPORTANT  
DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL

IN TWENTY-SIX SERMONS:

PREACHED AT THE

LIME STREET LECTURE.

By several eminent Ministers.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE occasion of composing these discourses, arose from a number of gentlemen in London, firmly attached to the interest of our divine Redeemer, and filled with a fervent zeal for the purity of the doctrines of revelation, taking into their consideration, that many evangelical truths, of the last importance, were not only secretly undermined, but violently opposed in their day, by subtle adversaries to the Gospel scheme, and, accordingly, they judged it proper to set up a public Lecture, that a course of Sermons might be preached in DEFENCE of sundry cardinal doctrines, then so openly impugned.

This laudable proposal met with the most hearty approbation, from the lovers of the truth as it is in Jesus. Accordingly, nine\* ministers, of eminent abilities, who had distinguished themselves in the world, by their elaborate writings, and who were made choice of for this undertaking, cheerfully engaged in it. Each of the ministers, by mutual consent, had the respective point of doctrine he was to establish and defend assigned him: all of them agreed, that the different subjects should be studied with the greatest accuracy and precision; the several divine truths set in the clearest point of view, from the sacred records; the whole discourses composed on a certain plan, and arranged in a regular and connected order. These preliminaries being settled, the Lecture was begun on the 12th of November, 1730, and continued weekly till April the 8th, 1731.

The capital and interesting doctrines handled at that time, and now contained in this volume, after an introductory discourse, entitled, *The Spirit's Standard lifted up, and displayed against Error*, are the following, viz.—The insufficiency of natural religion evinced;—the doctrine of particular election, stated and defended;—the doctrine of original sin, asserted and defended;—the Scripture doctrine of particular redemption, stated and vindicated;—the doctrine of Christ's sufferings opened;—a plain Scripture account of a sinner's justification before God;—the doctrine of efficacious grace, asserted and vindicated;—the doctrine of perseverance in grace, stated and defended;—the doctrine of the resurrection, opened and defended;—a vin-

\* Viz.—the Rev. Messrs. Bragge, Taylor, Sladen, Goodwin, Hurion, Bradbury, Wilson, Hall, and Dr. Gill.



dication of man's salvation by the free grace of God, from the charge of promoting licentiousness;—an humble and impartial inquiry into the causes of the decay of practical religion; or into the true grounds of the declensions, as to the life and power of godliness, visible in such as profess it in the present day. Most of these important subjects consist of several sermons.

When this course was finished, it was the unanimous desire of the gentlemen who set the Lecture on foot, and also the earnest request of the hearers, that the ministers would print their sermons: this being signified to them, they all readily complied with the repeated solicitations.

If the publication of these discourses was, at that time, judged a seasonable present to the church, their republication now cannot but be highly expedient, when such erroneous tenets, as sap the foundation of revealed truth, are now propagated, and have made such an universal spread in this country; and when the pure doctrines of the Gospel are so visibly corrupted by men of depraved minds, who impiously arraign, reproach, and pervert the dictates of inspiration.

The discourses themselves contain a rich mine of gospel-doctrine;—a great variety of judicious sentiments;—a clear explication of divine truths;—and a strenuous defence of a number of the essential articles of our received principles:—as such, they have been deservedly esteemed by all who have perused them.

The justly celebrated, and singularly pious Mr. Hervey, touching on one of the important articles, treated at great length in these volumes, viz. the final perseverance of the saints, speaks of them in a very warm manner; his words are: \* “The final perseverance of the saints is as much the doctrine of the Bible, as justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ: the latest and fullest view of the point, which I ever remember to have met with, in any of our English writers, is in the *LIME-STREET LECTURES*; which are a defence of several most important doctrines of the Gospel, and contained in one octavo volume; the united labours of nine modern divines, most of whom are well known to the world by their other evangelical and useful writings. In these lectures, among many other capital doctrines, the final perseverance of the saints is very particularly stated, and, to my apprehension at least, most satisfactorily proved. The arguments usually urged against it, are impartially considered; and I cannot but think, (with all due deference to the judgment of others,) unanswerably confuted.”

LONDON.

\* Hervey's Works in folio, p. 94, in octavo, vol. i. p. 375, 376.

## PREFACE.

WHEN doctrines of pure revelation are opposed, it is the duty of all who believe them, to appear in their defence; and this is really engaging in a noble cause; it is standing up for the honour of the great God, against those who set their imperfect reason and proud conceits above infinite wisdom; to strive for the faith once delivered to the saints, is most necessary, when it meets with the contradiction of sinners. As error never raged with greater violence than it does in our unhappy times, and as lukewarmness never discovered itself more than in the present day of darkness, it never could be more expedient than now, to plead for the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The sufficiency of the light of nature is warmly contended for by some who do not profess to reject revelation; and most of the doctrines of Scripture have been given up, one after another, by some who yet declare that the Bible is their religion. It is therefore now time, if ever, for those who see no reason to renounce the old Protestant doctrines, the glory of the Reformation, to bear their testimony against the errors of the day, and to stand up for the great truths which have been handed to them by their fathers, and which they have embraced, not merely because they have received them from the worthies who have gone before them, but because, after strict and impartial examination, they find that these, and no other, are the doctrines revealed in Scripture.

Near two years since, some gentlemen, who, it is to be hoped, have a true zeal and a hearty concern for the interest of Christ, judged it proper to set up a Lecture,\* for one winter and spring season, that a course of sermons might be preached in defence of several truths, which they reckoned to be of the last importance, and which are, in our time, violently opposed. Nine ministers, who were chosen for this work, cheerfully undertook it. When this course was finished, it was the unanimous desire of the gentlemen that they would print their sermons; with which request they have complied, hoping to do some service, if it is only by establishing wavering minds in the great doctrines which are now matter of contest.

These discourses we now submit to the candid perusal of serious and judicious persons. We have not entered upon the

\* This Lecture was begun at the Meeting in Lime-Street, where the Rev. Mr. Bragge stately preaches, on November 12th, 1730, and was continued weekly, till April 8th, 1731

direct proof of the truth of our holy religion, because it was not our design to engage with proper deists, but with erroneous professors of Christianity. The great doctrines of the blessed Trinity and of the person of Christ we have not meddled with; seeing several of us have treated largely upon them before, and our labours are in many hands. Some thoughts which we had not time to deliver from the pulpit, we have taken the liberty to add. The bodily indispositions of some of our number, which ended in death, as to one\* who was a real credit to the cause, have occasioned a much greater delay in publishing this work than was apprehended when it was first put to the press, which is near a year since.

We can each of us say, as to ourselves, that we have advanced nothing but what we believe to be true, and agreeable to Scripture. If any, with meekness, gravity, and impartiality, shall think fit to object against what we have laid down, we hope we shall be enabled by the Holy Spirit to plead for the things of God; being desirous of nothing more than to establish the truth, as it is in Jesus. But if any should pursue us with rancour and reviling, with banter and grimace, we shall pass by such treatment with pity and silence. Or, should they, who shall be disposed to animadvert upon what we have delivered in the following sermons, charge upon us the sentiments of particular persons, we shall leave those concerned to vindicate their own tenets.

We recommend the whole of what we have done to the blessing of that good Master for whose glory we plead, and whose battles we fight; and we would humbly hope that our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the word of whose patience we desire to keep, and in defence of which we now appear, will make our endeavours to be of real service, to establish pious persons in the belief of the doctrines in dispute, and to furnish them with some weapons to repel the attacks of gainsayers.

LONDON,  
*June 13th, 1732.*

\* The Rev. John Hurriou.

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THE  
SPIRIT'S STANDARD

LIFTED UP AND DISPLAYED AGAINST ERROR:

A SERMON,

BY MR. ROBERT BRAGGE,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

ISAIAH lix. 19.—When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

It is a glorious truth, which reflects light on the whole gospel, and adds lustre to all the works of God, that whatever God does, or suffers to be done, be it in the church, or in the world, is for the manifestation of his own glory. To this great end, that his glory may shine forth the brighter, his works of nature are made to subserve his designs of love and grace: the first Adam, at the head of this lower creation, was but the figure of him that was to come. Dark and dismal as the veil is which sin has spread over all nations, and great as the confusion is which it has hurled quite round the globe, all in the end will be so overruled, as to be an eternal illustration of the glory of God, as it shines forth in the face of Jesus Christ. The scattering caused by sin would not have been suffered, but to make way for the gathering together of the whole election of the Father's grace, in a far more glorious Head; of which you read, Eph. i. 10. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Full as hell is of darkness, the glory of God's vindictive justice shines brightly therein: and full as the enemies are of wrath, be they men or devils, all their wrath shall be made to praise God.

I shall not consider these words in their connexion; so to do, would take up too much of your time: but, in speaking to them, I shall observe the following method:

I. Who the enemy is whom the text speaks of, shall be my first inquiry.

II. Why the enemy is at any time suffered to come in like a flood, shall be my next.

III. I shall let you see how remarkably the Spirit of the Lord has all along lifted up a standard against them.

IV. I shall produce the standard which we, who are set for the defence of the gospel, should, as enabled by the Spirit, be now lifting up.

V. Who the present enemy is, which threatens to come in like a flood, shall be my last inquiry: And so I shall acquaint you with the design of this Lecture; and conclude with the joint request of the Lecturers.

I. I shall begin with the first of these; which is to tell you, who the *enemy* is, my text speaks of.

The truly gracious, of any denomination, are not to be numbered among the enemy. These may differ among themselves, and labour under mistakes about less matters; but "being one spirit with the Lord, they are enabled, whereunto they have attained, to walk by the same rule." Being taught of God, they are brought to acknowledge every good thing in Christ, that is to be found in one another; according to that golden rule, which regulates the communion of saints, Philem. 6. "That the communication of thy faith may become effectual, by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus." Was this rule of Christian fellowship more observed, we should differ without falling out. The unity of the Spirit would be preserved, at another rate than it is, in the bond of peace; neither would the people of God kindle fire on earth, or call for fire from heaven to devour one another. Neither babes, nor men, nor fathers in Christ, are the enemies my text speaks of; but the seed of the serpent are; who, in numberless instances, have discovered and are still discovering their bitter enmity against the seed of the woman. The people of God, whose New Testament name is that of *the saints*, and *faithful in Christ Jesus*, have all along had their enemies. Righteous Abel had a cruel enemy—bloody Cain. Thus the patriarch Jacob had a fierce enemy—profane Esau. Jacob, to be sure, took a wrong step to obtain the blessing; who was suffered thus to come at it, that it might appear he deserved it no more than did profane Esau, who discovered the plague and enmity of his heart, by resolving on the death of his brother. Thus Israel, under the Old Testament, had many and fierce enemies; there was Pharaoh, king of Egypt, with his cruel counsellors; there was Goliath of Gath, with his Philistines; there was Sennacherib, king of Assyria, with his railing Rabshakeh; there was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, with many more. Their own idolatrous kings were some of Israel's worst enemies; who were so outrageously wicked, as not only to lay aside the worship of the true God, but to place their idols in his temple: the calves at Dan and Bethel were very provoking, but idols in the temple itself were more so.

The top instance of the enmity which lives and reigns in the

seed of the serpent, is the treatment which Christ and his apostles met with, in the fulness of time, among the Jews, and wherewith his gospel and witnesses are still treated. One would have thought, that considering who Christ was, and on what kind errand he came, he should have had no enemy, especially among his own: the prophecies relating to the sufferings of the Messiah, were as unlikely to have had their accomplishment, as that of the kings of Europe consenting to give away their power to the beast: but accomplished they were, which is a wonderful proof of the truth of the Christian religion. Never had any more enemies, nor fiercer, than Christ had. They who waited for the consolation of Israel, were his friends; but how few were they? The rest, from them that sat in the gate, to them that deserved the stocks, were his enemies: he was the song of drunkards, as well as the envy of the Sanhedrim. His brethren did not believe in him, which was a plain proof he was no cheat; for had he been so, to be sure his brethren would have been let into the secret; and his near kinsfolks went forth to take him: he passed for an enemy to Cæsar among the rulers, and for a madman among his relations.

Thus his apostles, during the course of their ministry, had their enemies; few died a natural, but most a violent death; sealing the testimony they bore to the truth as it is in Jesus, with their blood. How was persecuting Saul persecuted, when he came to be a Christian! Hell soon turned the tables upon him, and was in an uproar against him. Thus the primitive saints had their enemies, both at Rome and at Jerusalem, and every where else. Wherever the seed of the woman had any footing, the seed of the serpent sent out a flood of persecution to destroy them. Witness the ten bloody persecutions under Rome Pagan; which have been outdone by Rome Antichristian: the dragon filled himself with the blood of the saints; but the scarlet whore has often made herself drunk therewith. In the massacre at Paris, she drank the blood of a hundred thousand Protestants; and of three hundred thousand in that of Ireland; and of a million in that great persecution of the Waldenses, and of the Albigenses. How did she begin to glut herself with English blood during the short reign of bloody queen Mary! Our civil rights, as Englishmen, have all along had their enemies: how forward were many during the reigns of king Charles and of king James, to have introduced slavery, as well as popery? And are there not still among us some who would be glad, were the prince absolute, and the clergy independent? Has the Reformation no enemies among us? Are all dead and gone, who hate to be reformed?

Thus the doctrines of the gospel have all along had, and still have their enemies. The doctrine of the resurrection had so; of which number were Hymeneus and Philetus, who said it



was *past already*, 1 Tim. i. 20. And so had the doctrine of Christ's true and proper divinity, of his incarnation, of his satisfaction, of his imputed righteousness, and of his efficacious grace.—Thus much may suffice, by way of answer to the first inquiry.

II. My next inquiry is this: why is the enemy suffered at any time, thus to come in *like a flood*? To which I answer, in six things.

1. It is for the manifestation of His glory, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, thus to suffer it; who can and will bring glory to himself, even praise, which is the top of glory, out of all the instances and attacks of the enemies' wrath, Psal. lxxvi. 10. "The wrath of man shall praise thee;" which holds as true of the wrath of devils. Had not Christ, the seed of the woman, been an overmatch for Satan, one abundantly able to bruise his head, the old serpent had not been suffered to enter paradise, nor to tempt our first parents, and last of all to prevail: but super-creating grace would have interposed; for to be sure, that grace, whence is our recovery by Christ the second Adam, could have prevented our fall in the first. Were not the King of saints able to cast the man of sin, as a millstone, into the sea of God's judicial wrath, to rise up no more for ever, Antichrist had not been suffered to show himself, and much less to wear a triple crown at Rome; the doing of which will outshine Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and Pharaoh's being drowned in the Red Sea. By this Christ will get unto himself a glorious name of praise, and be eternally exalted; whose glory, as man and mediator, will be but the greater, in God's salvation, for all the opposition it meets with from the enemy. It is with Christ, the Sun of righteousness, as it is with the natural sun; we may darken our houses, and shut out the light, but cannot darken the sun: should all eyes be put out, the sun would remain as full of light as ever; the seeing eye adds nothing to the shining sun, that is the same whether the horizon be full of clouds, or without them; its light and heat are but the more manifested and recommended, by our winter seasons and long nights.

2. It is also for the trial and exercise of all his people's graces that this is suffered. As the cash of the nation should not be locked up, nor hoarded, but traded with; so the graces of the Spirit are talents of such worth and usefulness, that God will not have them hid in napkins. Untried faith is uncertain faith, which holds true of the rest of our graces. Had not Abraham's faith been tried, he had not been called in the word of God, the *father of the faithful*, a higher title than his being the father of many nations, or Adam's being the father of all mankind. The trials and temptations of the people of God cannot be set in a sweeter light than they are, by the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

“Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Faith alone, because of its usefulness, is here mentioned; but all other graces are, doubtless, included. How shall the followers of the Lamb be brought off more than conquerors in the end, if they meet with no enemies in the way? Faith’s victories suppose a field of battle; a flesh lusting against the Spirit, a tempting world, and a raging devil. Mean and contemptible as the followers of the Lamb are, in the eye of the world, they will outshine all its Cæsars in the day of Christ’s appearance. “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory,” will be their tribute of praise above in glory; for none in heaven sacrifice to their own net, nor burn incense to their own drag; but shout *grace, grace*, and will do so for ever.

3. It is to rouse and awaken the wise virgins that this is suffered; who, in slumbering and sleeping with the foolish, act below their character, as they are God’s witnesses, and God’s remembrancers; who are to buy the truth as it is in Jesus, at any rate, but to part with it for no price: they are also to give the Most High no rest, until he so establish Jerusalem, as to make it the praise of the whole earth. Now, a sleepy, drowsy, lukewarm, indifferent frame ill becomes persons who are placed by God in so high a post, on whose diligence and watchfulness so much depends.

4. This is suffered, that the followers of the Lamb may take unto themselves the whole armour of God; no piece of which can well be spared; neither the girdle of truth, than which nothing is more dreaded by the father of lies; nor the breast-plate of righteousness, that is, of Christ’s imputed suretiship righteousness, which defends and screens the heart from the thunders of the law, as a broken covenant, and from the lashes of conscience for the breach thereof: neither can the saint’s shoe be any more missed, than the saint’s breast-plate; for the gospel of peace, received in the love of it, promotes practical godliness more than all the thunders of Sinai. And as for the shield of faith, we all need to be further taught how to manage it: it is among our graces like the sun among the planets; neither can we, who are as brands plucked out of the burning, be without the helmet of salvation, or lay aside the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; because ‘we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and with spiritual wickednesses in high places;’ with the rulers of the darkness of this world, who sit at the helm at Rome, at Constantinople, in the East and West Indies.

5. This is suffered to put those who are one spirit with the

Lord, upon looking up for a fresh anointing. Your having had him as the former rain, in your regeneration, should encourage you to ask, and to expect him as the latter rain, to the end of life: who, as certainly as he has laid the first, will bring forth the top-stone with shouting, not the Arminian shout of free will, but that of free grace unto it. To war as well as to worship in the Spirit, is what all the followers of the Lamb are called to: Satan is sure of victory whenever you go forth against him in your own spirits; a look unto Christ, your Head, for a fresh anointing, is of the utmost consequence, when we are called forth to battle.

6. I may add, this is suffered, to baffle and confound the enemy, who have missed the mark, as oft as they have bent their bow, and shot their arrows. Thus they missed it, in putting Pharaoh upon destroying the males in Israel, as soon as born; for then was Moses, Israel's deliverer, born, who had not been taken up by Pharaoh's daughter, and educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, had not his parents been forced to expose him. Never was Satan more desirous to accomplish any thing than the death of Christ; who, by dying, destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is the devil: where the enemy hoped to have triumphed over him, he spoiled them; whose cross proved their overthrow, and his resurrection their entire defeat. Thus in the pit which they dug for Christ, were their own feet taken.

III. I shall now give you some *memorable instances* of the enemy's coming in like a flood; and let you see how victoriously the Spirit of the Lord hath, all along, lifted up a standard against him.

1. How like a flood did the gates of hell come in upon all mankind, when the old serpent had artfully drawn our first parents into sin! Then, if ever, was there joy in hell; but hell's joy was but like a flash of lightning; for in the evening of that dark and gloomy day, did the glorious light of the gospel first break forth. That the old serpent was by when the threatening was pronounced, is very manifest, he being the first that was sentenced: to whom the first promise, if it was understood by him, must have been like a clap of thunder, before which he fell; who, as he had gained his point, so he was to receive his death's wound by the instrumentality of a woman; for it was her seed, and not the man's, that was to bruise his head. The standard of the first promise virtually contained in it all after-promises; for the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, are all three plainly hinted at, and foretold thereby; his incarnation, in his being called the seed of the woman, who was to be born of a virgin; his death and sufferings, by which his heel is most aptly and elegantly said to be bruised; his resurrection and victory, by which he effectually bruised the serpent's head.

2. How like a flood did the enemy come in, first in oppressing, and then in pursuing Israel! That Israel's name might

be extinguished, Israel's males were ordered to be drowned, as soon as born; and though God had, by an high hand of power delivered his people out of Egypt, Pharaoh resolved to pursue, with a prospect of overtaking and dividing the spoil: but how awful, as well as remarkable, was the standard which the Spirit of the Lord lifted up against Pharaoh and his host, by drowning them in the Red Sea; who were first infatuated, and so destroyed.

3. How like a flood did the Assyrians come in against Judah! Their defenced cities were taken, and Jerusalem besieged by an army of an hundred and fourscore and five thousand men, all full of rage and rancour against Israel, if any judgment may be formed of them by Rabshakeh's railing letter. But good Hezekiah, instead of returning railing for railing, gave himself to prayer; in answer to which, the Spirit of the Lord lifted such a standard, as effectually brought about Israel's deliverance; for the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote, in one night, an hundred and fourscore and five thousand of the Assyrians.

4. How like a flood did the enemy come in, in the reign of king Ahasuerus; when wicked Haman resolved by way of revenge, on the destruction of all the Jews! Not only they in Shushan were to be killed, both young and old, little children and women, in one day; but they from India to Ethiopia, even all that were to be found residing in any part of the king's dominions, who reigned over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces. But how remarkable was the standard which the Spirit lifted up against him! Wicked Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai; and the Jews every where were victorious over their blood-thirsty enemies, of whom they slew seventy-five thousand.

5. How like a flood did the enemy come in, in that hour of darkness, of which Christ speaks, Luke xxii. 53, "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." In it the enemy got Christ betrayed, denied, and crucified; and to make all sure, requested Pilate that the grave might be secured; accordingly, they set a watch, and sealed the stone. But how glorious was the standard which the Spirit lifted up in the early resurrection of Christ! Mat. xxviii. 2, 3, 4: "Behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it; his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."

6. In the ten bloody persecutions raised by Rome Pagan, Satan came in like a flood, hoping to crush the church in its infancy; but such and so glorious was the standard which the Spirit, in those early days, lifted up against him, that the blood

of the martyrs became the seed of the church. As in Egypt, the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied; so the primitive Christians propagated the gospel, by their sufferings for it; the patience they acted, and their praying for their persecutors, overcame many of them; and the sealing of their testimony with their blood made their testimony but the more regarded.

7. How like a flood did the enemy come in, in the rise and progress of Antichrist, who is drawn and described to the life in the prophecies of the New Testament! Hardly a circumstance of any consequence is there omitted, from the word MYSTERY, writ on his forehead, to his making merchandize of the souls of men. But how glorious and successful was the standard which the Spirit lifted up in the Reformation! though the man of sin was then in his height of power, saying, in his heart, he should never be moved; the first Reformers were in Christ's hand an overmatch for him, by whose ministry he received such a wound, as will never be healed.

8. To conclude this head. A little before Satan's binding, and immediately after his being loosed, he is to come in like a flood. A little before his binding, he is to come in like a flood in latter-day darkness; of which you have a very humbling account: 2 Tim. ii. 1, &c. "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;" and likewise in getting the witnesses slain, who are the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus; such as bear their testimony against error to the truth, as it is in Jesus, who are to prophesy in sackcloth, during the long reign of Antichrist; towards the close of which, the beast out of the bottomless pit is to make war with them, and to overcome and kill them; and the dead bodies are to lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified: which great street seems to me to be Europe, which is the most trading, populous, and improved part of the first Adam's world, which is the great city that is deservedly called Sodom and Egypt, into which Christ was born, and in which he was crucified. But how glorious is the standard which the Spirit, in those last days will raise up against the enemy! of which you read, Rev. xi. 11: "After three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them; and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them; and the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell."

Rome's downfall seems to be the immediate consequence of their resurrection; which is followed by latter-day glory, chap. xi. 15, "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

After Satan is loosed, he will be suffered to come in like a flood, which will be his last effort, and, of consequence, his boldest and fiercest onset, of which you read, chap. xx. 7, &c. "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, (where America, which is the fourth quarter of the earth, is plainly pointed at,) Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea: and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." By which fire, it is highly probable, the first Adam's world will be burnt up; of which the apostle Peter speaks, 1 Peter iii. 7, for, in the close of this chapter, you have an account of judgment, and of the perdition of ungodly men; and at the beginning of the following chapter, of a new heaven and of a new earth.

IV. I shall next observe what the *standard* is, which we, who preach the gospel, should now be lifting up.

1. Negatively. Not the standard of a Plato, nor of a Seneca, which is that of carnal reason, supported by philosophy, and varnished over with a show of morality; which can no more supply the place of the gospel, than the dim light and shine of the moon and the stars can supply the place, or make up for the want of the light and warm beams of the sun. Though the mind of man was originally the candle of the Lord, it is blown out by sin into a stinking snuff: witness the stench of idolatry and superstition the world has for so many ages past been filled with. Neither is the standard, we should lift up, that of Antichrist; which is fire and fagot, with all the instruments of cruelty, which a raging devil could invent, or a bloody inquisition make use of; who, in making converts, prove themselves to be none of Christ's disciples, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Rome's cruelties are the reverse of Christ's bowels. Neither is the standard we are to lift up, that of Mahomet, whose weapons were carnal, and not spiritual; such as flattery, and the force of arms, polygamy, and a carnal paradise; who, instead of foretelling sufferings, promised victory; and instead of working miracles, was full of debaucheries. Neither is the standard we are to lift up, that of the Jews; which is that of fables, and romantic traditions, of which their Talmud, and the other writings, are full; who, though they have the Old Testament entire, and the free use thereof, yet it

is to them as a sealed book, the veil of their hearts not being taken away. This they kept for us, as we do the New Testament for them. In a word, the standard we are to lift up, is not that of any party, in opposition to Christ, whose written word is the touch-stone of all we preach, and of all we print. To this one and only standard of truth, and warrant of the reformation, we are ready to bring all our sermons, confessions, catechisms, and bodies of divinity: by this we endeavour both to preach and to pray, to walk and to worship.

2. Having thus returned a negative, I shall return a positive answer to this great inquiry; what is the standard which such as preach the gospel should lift up? To which I answer; the same, for substance, which Moses and all the prophets lifted up, under the Old Testament; which was Christ, in type or figure, and which the apostles and evangelists lifted up, under the New, which was Christ without a veil. Christ, as he is God's salvation, or the truth, as it is in Jesus, is the standard we should be lifting up. This, like the canopy of heaven, is of a vast extent, and would employ the mind of a Solomon, to the years of a Methuselah, in the study thereof; as it has done, for a longer space of time, the minds of angels; and yet we are told, for their comfort and encouragement, who are babes in Christ, that "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." 1 John v. 1. Now, where this new birth is, there will be a following on to know the Lord; to which end such a book as the Bible is put into every believer's hand, and the Spirit promised, to teach us the right use thereof. Now, in lifting up this standard, against the impenitent and unbelieving world, we should preach, as the apostle Paul did, "repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xx. 21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ." It is not sufficient for us, who preach the gospel, to teach the duty of repentance, unless we tell our hearers where, and from whom the grace of repentance is to be had; "That Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins." Acts v. 31.

In lifting up this standard against the Arians and Socinians, we should enlarge on the true and proper divinity of Christ; and let our hearers know, that there is not that name in scripture, by which the living and true God is known and distinguished from dumb idols, but is given to the Lord Jesus Christ; neither is there that divine perfection mentioned in scripture, by which the living and true God is distinguished from lifeless idols, but is ascribed to the Lord Jesus Christ. Neither is there any act of divine worship mentioned or commanded, in scripture, to be paid to the living and true God, and forbidden to be given to idols, but is commanded to be given to the Lord Jesus

Christ. Neither are there any works, either of nature, or of grace, be it creation-work, or that of preservation, or the disposals of providence; or redemption-work, be it renovation of the soul, or the resurrection of the body, or the judging of the world; or the making of all things new, but they are ascribed in scripture, to the Lord Jesus Christ; which is full and abundant proof, that, according to his divine nature, he is one in essence with the Father; not a mere creature, though the first of all creatures, but the most high God, manifested in the flesh. To say, that in the Bible such things as these are ascribed unto a mere creature, would be to place that book of God below the Koran.

We should also, in lifting up this glorious standard against the Pelagians and Arminians, enlarge on the love and grace, on the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ; and let our hearers know, how able he is to save, to the utmost of God's mercy, and of the sinner's misery, all that come to God by him; in making elect sinners first a wise and a willing, and so a pardoned, justified, reconciled, adopted, sanctified, and at last, a glorified people.

We should also, in lifting up this standard, enlarge on the incarnation of Christ, and on those royalties which belong to him, as he is God's essential Word made flesh: of which royalties you have a short, but a most incomparable account given by Paul to the Colossians, Col. i. 15, &c. That Christ is there spoken of, as incarnate, is evident, because, thus considered, he hath blood; of which you read, chap. i. 14. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Then follows, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." As more of God is to be seen in one man, especially in the first Adam, than in all the beasts of the field, or birds of the air; so more of the glory of God is to be seen in the face or person of Jesus Christ, than in the whole world of angels, as well as of men; or in never so many worlds of mere creatures, never so varied or diversified. Mathematicians can easily tell how many ways the letters of the alphabet may be disposed, or how many millions of words may be made out of four and twenty letters; but who can say how many worlds may, by the power of God, be formed out of so much matter as this earth and the visible heaven contain? But let their possible numbers be what they will, it may be said for the glory of our Emmanuel, that his face will outshine them all; for, God manifested in the flesh, must be, and is the top manifestation God ever did, or will



make of himself, either to men or to angels. Accordingly we are told, Psal. l. 3. that "out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined;" so shined, as to outshine all other discoveries; just as the natural sun outshines the moon and all the stars; and in the gift of Christ to be the Head of the church, and Saviour of the body, he hath abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence, Eph. i. 8. "Wherein he hath abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence;" a like place with this, Col. ii. 3. "In whom, or wherein, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." There seems to me to be a like difference between God manifested in the flesh, and all other manifestations, which there is between the print of a man's foot, and his personal presence. How little of the man is to be known by the print of his foot, if compared with what may be known by personal converse! One "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," must vastly outshine all the inhabitants of heaven, how glorious soever they may be. Thus is our Emmanuel "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person," and he is God-man Mediator; for thus considered the apostle speaks of him, Heb. i. 3, &c. For the *purging of our sins* there mentioned, was made by the *shedding of his blood*, who, as incarnate, had blood to shed; blood, so his own as no other blood was or could be. By his Word to be made flesh, God made the worlds; by him, as incarnate, he upholds and governs them: thus considered he is Head of confirmation to elect angels, and a Head of redemption to the elect among the children of men. The royalties belonging to Christ, as he is the Word made flesh, should no more be passed over in silence by us, in lifting up this standard, than the temple at Jerusalem should be left out in the history or map of that city. We may safely say it, that had not our Emmanuel, thus considered, been laid in the purposes of God as the foundation of the whole creation, this world would have been like a house built upon the sand; in which sense he may well be called, and is, "the first-born of every creature."

V. I shall now give you some account of the *design* of this Lecture; which is truly great, and such as becomes us Protestant dissenters to engage in; for it is no other than in Christ's name, and under the influences of his Spirit, to lift up a standard against error.

There are great evils, which not barely threaten, but are actually coming in like a flood upon us.

1. There is the horrible evil of *Atheism* introduced by a number of free-thinkers, whom the word of God calls *fools*; Psal. xiv. 1. who out-sin the devil, in going about to persuade themselves, and others, that there is no God. Of these I am credibly informed there are several clubs in this great city; and yet it is no less certain, that there must be an eternal, unorigin

ated Being, than it is that there is any Being at all; for as certainly as something now is, something has always been; which eternal unoriginated Being is God. It is also as certain, that the several species, or kinds of beasts, of birds, of fishes, and of insects, as well as the children of men, could not at first come into this world, as they now do; the first man, for instance, could have no father, but must, by some superior power, be immediately formed, and brought forth, not in a state of helpless infancy, but able to help himself. Thus the first of beasts must not need the dug; nor the first of birds be from an egg, or need the nest, or the wing. As lumps of paint never so well mixed, though they may be said virtually to contain all the pictures which the ablest hand can draw with them, yet without a skilful hand can express nothing, so dull inactive matter cannot form itself into the meanest plant, or insect, without a superior power; which superior Being, who formed all things, is God.

2. Another desolating evil, like to the former, is that of *Deism*, introduced by a set of men, who, taking no notice of the damage done by sin, assert the sufficiency of natural religion, to make men happy in both worlds, and so pour the utmost contempt on all divine and supernatural revelation, how well soever it is attested, though by a cloud of witnesses, many of whom sealed their testimony with their blood; by a great number of miracles wrought in the presence of inquisitive, as well as of implacable enemies; and by a set of most remarkable prophecies, which have all along had their accomplishment, and are still accomplishing. The light of nature when at best is but like the shine of the moon, if compared with the sunshine of the gospel; and, since the fall, is like the moon in an eclipse: now, if the moon, at full, be not able, much less is it, when in an eclipse, able, either to make or to rule the day. Deism, about an hundred years ago, was, in a manner, confined to France and Italy; but of late it has passed the Alps, and crossed the seas, and spreads like a mighty contagion far and near here in England.

3. Another desolating evil, which not only threatens, but is come in like a flood upon us, is that of *error* in the *things of God*; particularly in the doctrines of the gospel, from that of the Arian, to that of the Galatian error; or from those who deny the true and proper divinity of Christ, to such as say he is not "the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes;" which is no new nor unforetold enemy; for the apostle, so many years ago has told us, that "there must be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest." But, blessed be God, though the foundations may be attacked and undermined, they cannot be removed; for if they could, what should the righteous do?

4. Another desolating evil, which threatens to carry all before it, is that of *profaneness*. This is supported by such as regard

not the sabbath; but cry down all public worship; make a jest of closet and family prayer; banter and burlesque Scripture, and pour the utmost contempt on a standing ministry; though it has been hitherto, and will to the end of time be supported by Christ, who said, "Lo, I am with you alway, unto the end of the world."

5. Another desolating evil, is that of *immorality*. This is nearly allied to, but not the same with the former, and is propagated and spread, not barely by private conversation, but in print, by such as deny that there is any intrinsic real difference between moral good and moral evil; who say, to tell a lie, is, in the nature of the thing, as commendable as to speak the truth; and to be a thief, as to be an honest man. But they may as soon persuade us, that there is no real difference between light and darkness, pain and pleasure, life and death. The mind in man is under a like necessity to own, that a dutiful son, or subject, excels one that hath murdered his father, or shot his prince; as the palate is to give the preference to wholesome pleasant food, before stinking carrion; or, as the eye is, to prefer a pleasant agreeable prospect, before a dark cave, or a dreadful precipice. It is not more evident to the mathematician, that the three angles of every triangle are equal to two right angles, than it is to all mankind, that justice and mercy excel tyranny and oppression.

6. Another desolating evil, which threatens to overflow like a flood, is that of *libertinism*, or turning the grace of God into wantonness. It is not unlikely but Cain might presume, upon the grace of the first promise, in his murder of Abel: to be sure those libertines did on that of the gospel, of whom Jude speaks, Jude, ver. 4. and thus do multitudes in our dark day; for though a work of grace cannot be abused, all the doctrines of grace may. The outward court is full of libertines, who are not under the law to Christ; of whom the apostle speaks, Phil. iii. 18, 19: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."

These are the evils of our times; some of which we, who preach this lecture, shall, in Christ's name, and under the influences of his Spirit, lift up the standard of the Word against, even the truth, as it is in Jesus; who, as God manifested in the flesh, was a full, unanswerable, visible, and most satisfying proof of the being of a God; of the truth of the Old Testament, and consequently a matchless recommendation of the Christian religion, as it is contained in the New. Nothing could be expected from the Word made flesh, and in that flesh sustaining the character of a Redeemer, that was not to be met with in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ: his divinity, sonship, and mediation, were written in characters full

of greatness and glory upon all these ; so written as to put angels to school again : those vast proficient in the book of nature, are represented as learning of the church, *the manifold wisdom of God*, as it shines forth in the face of our Emmanuel, the Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. iii. 10.

The design of this Lecture therefore is not to oppose any other orthodox Lecture, nor to put a slight upon any of our brethren in the ministry; but to bear an extraordinary united testimony against growing infidelity, and spreading errors.

Now, we your Lecturers, though we neither expect nor desire the encouragement of the purse, want your prayers ; that in a spirit of meekness, and not of wrath and bitterness, we may instruct those who shall oppose themselves, and defend, with a right gospel spirit, the great truths thereof ; for between true Christian zeal and rage, there is a like difference, which there is between the warm beams of the sun, and the desolating flames of *Ætna*.

*Brethren, pray for us*, that we may neither study nor preach, nor pray in our own spirits, but do all in Christ's Spirit ; the promise of whom, as he is Christ's glorifier, is, in a way of eminency, the promise of the Father under the New Testament ; as the promise of the Messiah was his promise under the Old.

For your encouragement who shall attend, as well as for ours who are to preach, take the following Scripture, and with it I will conclude, Psal. xciii. 3, 4 : "The floods have lifted up, O Lord ; the floods have lifted up their voice ; the floods lift up their waves : " Understand it of ungodly men, in all ages and places ; especially of such as persecute the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus, though, for want of power, it be only with the lip and pen : "The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters ; yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

THE  
INSUFFICIENCY OF NATURAL RELIGION.

TWO SERMONS.

BY ABRAHAM TAYLOR,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON I.

1 CORINTHIANS xi. 14.—The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

God created man upright, but he soon fell and stripped himself of the robes of innocence and integrity, with which he was clad, as he came pure out of his Maker's hands. It lay entirely in the disposing will of God, whether he would save man at all after his revolt; and seeing he thought fit to rescue part of Adam's posterity from the ruin which the fall brought upon them, he certainly had a right to pitch upon what method he thought fittest, to bring about their recovery.

Whether God could have accomplished the salvation of men as well any other way, as in the method he has taken of choosing them in Christ, entering into a covenant with him, as the Surety, and with all the elect in him as his seed; and, in the fulness of time, sending him in the flesh, that he might suffer death, to purchase the redemption of such as he had given him, is a question too high for us to determine, and therefore is vain and unprofitable. It is insolently intruding into things not seen, for us to take upon us to determine absolutely what a God of infinite wisdom and power may do, or might have done. However, this we must tenaciously adhere to, that it is inconsistent with the nature of God, for him to injure any of his perfections, to save such as deserved not his favour; we are not to doubt but that God will glorify one attribute as well as another, in rescuing ruined criminals: so that, though we suppose him ever so unlimited in his sovereignty, or ever so rich in his mercy, we must still aver, that he never would, in order to show his sovereignty, or make known his mercy, suffer his justice to remain unsatisfied, and consequently not glorified, or his holiness and truth to be tarnished; but he is as much concerned to glorify his justice, and to show forth his holiness and truth, as he can be to manifest his sovereignty, or to magnify his mercy.

God therefore showed the greatness of his wisdom in contriving the method of man's salvation, that it might be by

Christ's satisfying for sin: in this way all his perfections are set in the most amiable light; justice is glorified to the utmost, and has vindicated its rights, in that a satisfaction of infinite value has been yielded by an almighty Redeemer; holiness sparkles with the brightest lustre, seeing he, who is purity itself, has showed his hatred of sin to be so great, that he spared not his own Son, when he only knew sin by imputation; the truth of him who is invariable in faithfulness, is fully established, in that he has exacted the punishment threatened; goodness appears in its full beauty, as a Redeemer is provided for such as have destroyed themselves, and the greatest blessings are bestowed freely upon the unworthy; mercy is displayed to the utmost, because provision is made for bringing sinners to partake of the happiness they had forfeited; wisdom and power are greatly magnified, since a way is laid out and finished, in which justice and holiness might not be injured, and yet grace and mercy might be eminently exalted.

This is the method of man's salvation, which the Scriptures teach; and as it is the only way of thinking which man can fall into, in order to glorify all God's perfections, it must be concluded to be the most rational scheme in the world. The design of God was to glorify his own perfections, to exalt Christ, to stain the pride of man's glory, and to show the necessity of holiness; therefore, as the Holy Scripture declares and reveals this wonderful plan, it is no marvel that it should be ridiculed, as a huddle of foolish opinions, by the vain and proud pretenders to reason, who make what surpasses their shallow capacities the subject of their scorn, and treat with contempt all that is above their contracted apprehensions. As the design of revelation is to thwart the pride of fallen man, it is no wonder that insolent creatures, who would be independent on God, and who imagine that they are wise enough to find out their duty, and able enough to pursue their own happiness, should rise up with rancour and malice, against what crosses their corrupt reason, and has a tendency to throw down the lofty bulwarks of their vain imaginations. The contempt which is cast on revelation is not new; for the great apostle Paul, after he had told us that he spake or declared the things that are freely given us of God, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, has presently subjoined these words: "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." By the *natural man*, is not to be understood one wallowing in lust, and sunk in the mire of sensuality, but the man of bare reason; he who will use no other helps than what he can procure by mere rational attainments, such a man, though possessed of a good share of natural light, yet if he is without

a spiritual discerning, or without wisdom afforded him from above, brands the doctrines and mysteries of pure revelation with folly, because he cannot fully comprehend them; not considering that the mysteries of reason, such as the being and perfections of God, can no more be fully comprehended by him, than those of revelation. If we consider man as renewed, and as such having his mind enlightened, it must be owned, that the mysteries of reason and pure revelation have such great depths in them, that they are not to be sounded by the line, even of a sanctified understanding: nay, it may be justly said, that the perfections of God are not to be fully grasped by any created mind. It is no wonder, then, that such as are left to bare reason in a corrupt state, should as brute beasts condemn the sacred verities which are not suited to their depraved lust.

The Scriptures have never been treated with more irreverence than they have been of late; but yet the enemies of revelation choose rather to attack them by sap and stratagem, than in an open and honourable way. Our modern Deists are shy in saying, in their public writings, that the Christian religion is forgery, and the founder of it an impostor; but they choose to magnify the perfection of reason, and to set up what they call natural religion, as a complete body of doctrine; they can talk with a grave sneer, of the Holy Scriptures, of the religion of our Saviour, and will pretend they esteem it; but, at the same time, they plead that natural religion is perfect, and needs no addition to be made to it, only they allow it may be explained: hence they draw this consequence, that the gospel is as old as the law of nature, and neither can nor ought to be any other than a republication of it. Their sly drift herein is to bring people to conclude, that since natural religion is perfect, if revelation contains any thing more than reason could of itself have found out, it must be discarded as imposture: now, every one must grant, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament really contain a great number of facts and doctrines, which bare reason could never have found out; if, then, reason is a perfect rule, revelation, which contains more than this could find out, must be given up as fraud and forgery; for nothing can be added to what is perfect. This is the substance of all the solemn banter and grave grimace, with which the world has of late been entertained; so that it cannot be amiss to inquire, whether reason in men is really so perfect, as the pretended masters of it give out; and whether natural religion is so complete, as is affirmed.

It must be owned, that the labour of the Deists in assaulting the Christian scheme, has been made very easy, and their work has been in a great measure done for them, by many treacherous professors of the religion of Jesus. Many betrayers of the cause of revelation have forged weapons for the enemies of it, in preventing them the pains of attacking particular doctrines.

Men who would lose all patience, if we questioned their own ing the sufficiency of Scripture, and who have very much in their mouths a noisy outcry, that the Bible, the Bible, is the religion of Protestants, have brought the charge of nonsense and contradiction against the Protestant doctrines of the ever-blessed Trinity in Unity, absolute election, original sin, the necessity of an infinite satisfaction, the fulness and particularity of redemption, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, the inability of man to convert himself, the efficacy of divine grace, the perseverance of the saints, the resurrection of the same numerical body, and the eternity of hell torments: all these doctrines have been misrepresented, exploded, derided, and burlesqued by such as profess themselves Christians, nay, by such as would appear zealous to promote practical religion: so that the Deists have had little to do, but to stand still and smile, whilst others were doing their work for them, perhaps without knowing it; though it is to be feared, that some of these would not keep out of their tents, if they could retain their preferences, salaries, or subscriptions.

It would be well, if all who have gone into this way, who are alarmed at the growth of Deism, would consider what they have been doing. Many have been immoderately pleased with being applauded, by the adversaries of revelation, for being rational divines, and men of free thought; but though the enemies of Christianity compliment them, to induce them to go on to do their work for them, yet it is known to many that they secretly condemn them. The more thinking Deists know that the doctrines which these disputers arraign, as unscriptural and irrational, are the things which are really contained in Scripture, which, for that reason chiefly, they neglect; and they look upon these removers of the ancient land-marks, however they may flatter them, either to be fools or cheats. The opposers of the ancient faith are very forward to ascribe the growth of infidelity to men's being led to pay a regard to what they call irrational doctrines; but the case really is, a denial of revelation has always followed upon attempts made to subvert the old protestant doctrines, and as these have succeeded with giddy unsettled persons, in proportion have the ravages of Deism been extended.

Another thing which has greatly contributed to weaken the cause of Christianity, has been the zeal of some to recommend systems of morality, under the whimsical title of natural religion. There is no question to be made, but that some persons, who engaged this way, had no design to weaken the regard men should have to revealed religion, but by these means the peculiar doctrines of Christianity have been jumbled out. It has been said, that during the times of our civil commotions, there was little preached up but faith in Christ, and that the duties of morality were little insisted on: it is certain, that some



ignorant enthusiastic preachers insisted then much on eternal union with Christ, and that sin could do a believer no harm, but all wise and thoughtful men abhorred such immoral conceits; however, the charge was laid against all who maintained the doctrine of grace; and accordingly when a state-alteration ensued, as it is natural for men who take a partial view of things, when they endeavour to avoid one extreme, to run into the other, neglecting the middle way, all strove to show themselves as opposite to those who went before, as might be. Therefore the Christian doctrines, if not opposed, were wholly neglected, and little was insisted upon but moral duties, under the odd title of natural religion: then books could be written on the Christian plan, called *The Whole Duty of Man*, without stating the doctrine of faith in Christ, the prime duty of a Christian. It must be observed, that at the same time that natural religion was talked of, to the neglect of the doctrines of revelation, a deluge of Atheism, irreligion, and immorality, flowed in upon those of the national establishment; and whether, since we of the separation have heard so much noise about it, there has not been a declension as to justice and common honesty, a contempt of the Sabbath, and a neglect of public worship, is what every one is able to judge of, who has looked a little into the world.

I. I shall inquire what we ought to understand by *natural religion*; or in what sense the light of nature is to be taken.

Since so many fine things have been said of natural religion, it may be well worth while to consider what the thing is, which is dressed up in such fair colours, and which every one is so much at a loss to find out. In one sense it may be taken for the light with which Adam and Eve, our first parents, were blessed, whilst they were clad with innocence. If it is taken in this sense, it must be granted, that reason was much more perfect than it is now. Our great progenitor, and our general mother, as long as they ranged the fragrant bowers of paradise, and strayed about the pleasant mazes of that wilderness of sweets, in which the kind hand of their Creator had placed them, were very happy creatures. Their understandings were clear and strong, their judgment was unbiassed, and no disorderly passions raged in their unruffled breasts; they were created in the image of God, and the likeness of their mighty Maker shone forth in wisdom, truth, and severe and pure sanctity; their obedience to the law of their God was not forced, neither was it from fear; but they fulfilled the command of him who placed them in happiness, with delight and alacrity: they knew all that was necessary for them to be acquainted with, and they yielded universal obedience to the various commands of the heavenly Potentate, who created them out of the dust.

Though it is to be allowed that reason was much more com-

plete and perfect, in our first parents, before the fall, than it is in us their miserable posterity, since we have been plunged into ruin and misery by their apostasy; yet it is not to be granted that the light of nature was every way a complete and perfect rule, even in the state of innocence and integrity. Though man was free from sinful imperfections, yet he was not an absolutely perfect being, for no creature is such; and as he was not absolutely perfect, so his natural light was not an absolutely complete rule to go by. If it had been so, he would not have needed any directions, as to what he was to do, but would, without any supernatural assistance, have known his duty in every part and circumstance of it: but this was far from being the case; he needed to be instructed by God, Gen. i. 29. ii. 16, 17. as to his circumstances of life, and as to some parts of his duty. It was by supernatural light, or by revelation from God, that he came to know that he had dominion over all the creatures in the lower world; it was by divine direction that he was to take fruits and herbs for his food; it was by a command from above that he was to refrain from eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death; and it was by instruction from his Creator that he performed instituted worship, or kept the seventh day as a day of sacred rest. These revelations would never have been made to our first father, whilst he continued peacefully to enjoy the spicy groves of paradise, if natural light had been to him a perfect rule. If he had not needed supernatural light, God would not have afforded it, for the all-wise Creator does nothing in vain, whatever foolish men may think; therefore as he had light by revelation, it is plain he needed it; and if so, reason was not every way a perfect rule. If any urge, in answer to this, that the account Moses gives of the primitive state of man is an allegory, they are to be pitied for their profaneness and pride; and they are not to be envied for not having reverence for Scripture, and humility sufficient to make them submit their wisdom to revelation, and to induce them, when they are gruelled with an insurmountable difficulty, frankly to own it.

However, if we were to suppose reason in man, in a state of innocence, to be a perfect rule, of what avail is all this to us, who may find, by sad experience, that it is not with us as it was with man when he reposed himself in the peaceful shades of Eden and roved about the verdant walks of paradise? Our understandings are now darkened, so that we are often at a loss about the nature of our duty; and when we cannot say we are entirely ignorant of our duty, and are, in judgment convinced that we ought to comply with it, how are our understandings blinded, and our judgments corrupted by our vainly passions, and our irregular appetites! If reason were our only rule, we should bribe it to silence, by the pleasure of following our own inclinations, and then we should be swayed by vainly lusts,

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without the least opportunity of knowing that the things in which we delight, if pursued throughout, would entail endless disquietments upon us.

The common notion persons now seem to have of natural religion, is, that it is a body of principles and duties, which men gather from reason and Scripture, receiving into their systems whatsoever they like in revelation, and leaving out all such doctrines as they do not approve of. That there is one God, and that he is invested with infinite perfections, is the voice of reason and revelation; this therefore must needs be put down as the prime doctrine of natural religion; that this one God rules and guides the universe, by his wise providence, is what reason and observation may assure us of; this therefore is not left out of the systems of the religion of nature; that the soul is immortal, and that there is a final state of happiness and misery, is what few are hardy enough to deny; that men, as creatures, are obliged to worship and serve the God, to whom they owe their being; and that, as creatures fitted for society, they are obliged to consult the good and happiness of others, is what all have not the front to call in question.

These principles which have met with the general assent of mankind, are the great principles of reason and Scripture: any one who will not admit any of these, if he will take the pains to see what dress could be made up for them, out of the writings of mere pagans, will soon be convinced, that they must wear no other than a mean and contemptible garb, such as would not set them off, or recommend them to the high esteem of men: they might be compared to a picture not coloured, where the lines may be drawn with art and regularity, but have not a striking force upon the eye: but if these principles of reason are set off with the strong, lively, and glowing colours, in which they are painted in the Scriptures, they command admiration. What account can be gathered from the writings of pagans, of the being and perfections of God? Though they owned one Supreme, yet they introduced a rabble of inferior gods, and so worshipped creatures besides the Creator. How low and lame were their notions of the spiritual nature, and the immortality of the soul! And what mean figments did they take up with about a future state! How uncertain were they about God's governing the world! And though they had among them some who were great proficient in several social duties, what can we gather from them of love to God, resignation to his wise disposal, as to the concerns of life, self-denial, and universal charity and benevolence? These are duties which are agreeable to right reason; but let any one say where they are well stated, by such as were entire strangers to revelation. Therefore in our day, natural religion is decked in plumes borrowed from Scripture, and then is set up in opposition to it, as a perfect

rule, and as such not needing the assistance of a revelation. This is scandalously base and unfair. For instance: no one mere rational writer ever gave a tolerable account of a future state; and none of the delineators of the religion of nature, since the promulgation of Christianity, ever did it, without leaving the plainest traces of his having aid from Scripture; and yet these sketches, which are drawn by the help of Scripture, must be palmed upon the world, as the doctrines of mere reason unassisted by the light of revelation.

Thus Scripture is pillaged, in order to its being represented as a needless useless thing; for if a man can be so silly, as to be brought to think, that those points which artful men pick out from Scripture, which has nothing inconsistent with reason, though it contains much above mere human reason, are things to be known without the help of it, they will easily give it up as unnecessary; and the more, because it reveals matters too high for their low understanding, and so thwarts their pride. It is not fair then to call that natural religion, the defects of which are supplied by truths taken from the oracles of God; neither is it just to recommend it as a perfect scheme, when it cannot be put in any tolerable dress, without the necessary help of that very thing, to make which seem unnecessary, so much pains are taken to deck it. All this must be understood of natural religion, when it is set off in the best manner; but it must be owned, that some of its recommenders are so infatuated, as not to borrow that help they might, in order to make it agreeable, and are so ignorant, as to show its imperfection, by making it resemble Atheism. We are told, that the distinction of right and wrong, virtue and vice, is entirely independent of the will of God, and that it arises from the nature of things, by which senseless jargon may be meant fate, chance, the animating soul of the world, or any other unmeaning thing, or hard word, without an idea annexed to it. It is pretended, that men are not made by God for himself, and that he has no motive, on his own account, to give them laws, or to punish the breach of them, and that consequently they are not accountable to him; but that such fully answer the end of their creation, as contribute all they can to their own and others' happiness. This is to suppose, that God has power to create rational creatures, and it is a favour that this is allowed, but that he has no authority to prescribe for them laws, seeing the rules of justice rise from the nature of things, and he is confined to act by them, as much as those he has created; that he has no justice to glorify when he is provoked, but is obliged to be kind to all his creatures, whether they obey him, or rebel against him: in short, that he is an indolent Being, such as was the God of the Epicureans; that man is independent of him who created him, and preserves him; that he is to be his own judge, whether he answers the end

of his creation, by promoting his own happiness, and that of others.

Thus the irrational stuff, which was hissed off the stage, with just contempt, when it was introduced by Epicurus, is afresh brought on, to show the sufficiency of human reason, in our enlightened age of search and inquiry. It would be doing too much honour to such monstrous absurdity, to go about gravely to confute them; and it would be labour and time as ill spent, as it would be to argue with a man who stiffly denies that two and three make five, or to wrangle with one who will have it, that it is as light at midnight as at noon. The assurance with which such irrational fancies are vented, does not prove that their asserters have more brains, or brighter parts than others, but only that they have harder foreheads and thicker skulls than the generality of men. These bold champions of infidelity deny that man's reason is impaired by the fall; but they give the fullest demonstration that it is greatly sunk, even almost to a degree of brutality, in themselves, and by this afford us, though stupidly, and against their wills, a sensible proof of the fall of man, which they banter and insipidly ridicule. Were not the rational faculties greatly decayed, no persons could ever dream of a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, having no motive, on his own account, to give his creatures laws, or to punish the breach of them, and that men are not accountable to him that made them. It is not worth while to talk with creatures who have so much laid aside the use of reason; it is throwing pearls to swine: we can only refer the decision to the hour, which a few years will introduce, and then these rebels against heaven will find whether they are accountable to their Maker or not.

All that has been said of late, by way of panegyric upon reason and the light of nature, is founded on a mere fallacy. The adversaries of revelation do not speak of reason, as it is in this or the other man, as it may be less clear in one than in another, but they speak of reason in the abstract, and in that sense it may be allowed to be of a very large extent. No one will be so silly as to say, that reason, in the abstract idea of it, is insufficient and imperfect, for nothing is to be regarded which is contrary to reason. The question is not then, whether reason abstractedly considered is imperfect, for that would be questioning whether truth is truth, or whether right reason is right reason; which would be only trifling, and spending words to no purpose. True reason is right; and what is right, cannot, as such, be said to be imperfect: however, this poor and mean quibble is all that the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason have to talk upon. It would be ridiculous for any one to say, that the light of the sun is not sufficient to enable a man to keep his path; but it signifies very little, when a man is involved in the

shade of the evening, to tell him he must not question that the sun's light is sufficient for him to see by. The question really is, whether reason, as it is now in men, whether the light of nature, as it is in men in their present state, which none can venture to say, in fact, is not a state of degeneracy, is a sufficient rule to inform men what they ought to believe and receive, to show them how they may find out what is true and right, and to direct them in the more private walks of life, as well as when they appear on the public stage of the world, where they may have the advantage of seeing the examples of others; it is, whether natural religion, of itself, discovers all that a man is to believe concerning God, all the methods necessary for him to take in order to be reconciled to him, and regain his favour, and all that is required of man in his private, relative, and social character.

When we inquire whether reason is now a sufficient rule, the only sense in which we can take the light of nature, or natural religion, is, as the remains of natural light in men of superior reason, who have been left entirely without the help of revelation of any kind; and if it is tried carefully, or viewed in this light, it will appear to be very imperfect and deficient. It is easy to tell us, that reason is reason, truth is truth, and virtue is virtue; but what are we the wiser by being told such fine things, if we find ourselves and others deficient in reason, puzzled about truth, and apt to take vice for virtue? No one will say cruelty is good, but how many think that persecution, an enormous vice, is lawful, because it is designed for good ends, to set men right, and to keep them from leading others wrong! It is easy for men to pick things out of Scripture, and to prove them agreeable to reason, since there is nothing in the oracles of God, but what is consonant to the highest reason; by this means a very beautiful system of morality may be put together; but can this be a delineation of the religion of nature? The only way to judge of the sufficiency, on the one hand, and of the defects on the other, of the light of nature, is to examine whether it brightly shined, or was greatly shaded, in such as had nothing else to illuminate them, and who yet had as clear intellects, and as great knowledge of the world, as any now; and who, in learning and politeness, exceeded many of our new luminaries, or rather comets, who, instead of increasing our light, disturb the world, and spread error and irreligion. If it is thus tried, the light of nature will not be found to resemble the sun, when, crowned with surpassing glory, it illuminates the earth, but rather to be like it, when in dim eclipse, it sheds gloom and twilight over some parts of the world, and so puzzles and perplexes such as are not acquainted with the natural causes of its being darkened, and throws them into a state of doubt and uncertainty.



II. I shall show that *reason* is not a *perfect rule* in matters of religion; and shall answer some pleas that are offered in behalf of the monstrous and extravagant supposition, that it is a sufficient guide in sacred matters.

I would not be thought to have respect only or principally to professed Deists, but chiefly to regard those treacherous advocates for Christianity, who, under pretence of writing in its vindication, basely and vilely betray the noblest of causes to avowed infidels. It is only to have the good word of the enemies of revelation, who happen, through the degeneracy of our unhappy times, to gain a great vogue, that these base, ignoble, and ungenerous souls prove false to the interest of Him, whom they call their master, and traitorously give it up to his open enemies. That they give up the cause of Christianity to the adversaries of revelation, is most certain, for if reason is of itself a sufficient rule, any addition to what is of itself sufficient, is impertinent and needless; this is evident to the dullest capacity: and all that can be said in favour of revelation, by such as make this concession, is only showing, that they can contradict themselves; for if reason is of itself sufficient, in matters of religion, what need can there be of the Christian revelation? Was there any necessity to make known any thing new, and to require it to be believed, when what was known before was sufficient without it? This is granting to the Deists, that though there may be some good things in Christianity, yet there was no absolute necessity for it, which is what they desire to have yielded to them, and then it is easy for them to show the absurdity of adding any thing to what was good enough of itself, without any such addition. It is very well known, that the Deists are not wanting to make use of this extravagant concession; and any one, who consults their writings, may easily see that they, in reality, say very little, but what is put into their mouths, by such as would appear to stand up in the defence of revelation against them, but either through ignorance, or treachery betray the cause to them: whether it is through folly or knavery that this is done, it is certain, they who are guilty of doing it, have much to answer for, seeing they have done a great deal more hurt to the interest of Christ, than all the avowed enemies of it, of themselves, ever did or could do.

It is a very poor way of arguing, for any\* to tell us, "That

\* See the Plea for Human Reason, p. 47, 48. This is said, how truly I know not, to be written by Mr. Jackson, the noted Arian, the amanuensis to Dr. Clarke in the memorable dispute with Dr. Waterland, about the supreme divinity of our blessed Lord, which is called, by the ignorant blasphemers who wrote this Plea, a wretched Antichristian hypothesis. If Mr. Jackson is the author of the Plea, we may judge what was the design of Dr. Clarke and him, in advancing Arianism, viz. to open the way for Deism. Several things have been written on both sides, on the question I am upon, since these sermons were preached, which was in November, 1730, but I have chosen to let them appear as they were first composed.

the true preference of Christianity is (not that reason, in any state of men, is insufficient in itself to virtue and happiness, but) that Christianity is a clearer and more powerful guide, having improved the light of reason by the supernatural evidence and declaration of God's will, and final intention of saving sinners, by the free pardon of them for the sake and merits of the death of Christ, which mere reason was not able to discover or determine, and which plain declaration of the means of man's redemption is a more powerful motive and obligation to universal obedience, than reason could ever with certainty propose." This is a mere heap of confusion and inconsistency. It is very likely there is a juggle in using that odd expression, "Reason in any state of men;" but if it means any thing, it must have respect to reason in man's present corrupt state: Now, if reason, of itself, is a sufficient guide to virtue and happiness, can man need any thing more sufficient than a sufficient guide? can he need to be guided to any thing better than to virtue and happiness? certainly not. If so, then there is no necessity for a clearer and more powerful guide, or for its being improved by the supernatural declaration of God's will, relating to things which it could not discover, or for more powerful motives to obedience, than it could ever with certainty propose. On the other hand, if there was need of the Christian revelation to be a more sure light, and a more powerful guide than reason; if there was room for the defects of the light of nature to be supplied, by the declaring the wonderful plan of the salvation of sinners, on the account of the merits of the death of Christ, which was a mystery that was out of the ken of bare reason; and if there was cause to make use of a more powerful motive to universal obedience to the will of their great Creator, than natural religion could ever with certainty propose; if these things are true, as they certainly are, and are allowed to be by the advocates for reason, it will inevitably and invincibly follow, that reason in men, in their present state, is not a sufficient rule to guide them to virtue and happiness; and it may justly be asserted, that the pleaders for its sufficiency are stupid enough to contradict themselves, in saying, in the same breath, that it is sufficient, and yet there is need for its being still made more sufficient.

It is very odd, in the pleaders\* for the sufficiency of reason to say, that "Reason (if men would have attended to it) would always have given them sufficient hopes and security of their acceptance with God, upon their repentance, and sincere best endeavours to do what was right and good, and agreeable to reason." If by reason is meant reason in the abstract, what is said is entirely impertinent; for then by reason we must understand whatever is truth, and the whole of what is truth must be owned to be sufficient, to instruct men, if we suppose it made

\* Plea for Human Reason, p. 45.

known to them. If reason is taken for what share of light men, in their present state, possess, it inevitably follows, from what the advocates for its sufficiency allow, that it is really insufficient: for how can that which is in man, be his sufficient guide, if he has a propensity not to attend to it, but has such a mixture of darkness with his light, that he is at a loss what to think is best for him? Men's not attending to the dictates of right reason, but embracing things as truths, which are inconsistent with it, and contrary to it, shows that the light of nature, as it is now in them, is far from being a sufficient guide to them in matters of religion.

It is not agreeable to truth to say, that the reason of any finite being is perfect or sufficient, in an absolute sense; but if this could be allowed, it does not alter the case as to us, who are the descendants of apostate Adam: our nature, as we are fallen, sinful creatures, is corrupt, and consequently our reason is no sure light to guide us, because there is in our understandings much darkness, mingled with a little light. We need not desire a more plain proof of the imperfection of reason, in our corrupt state, than what we may gather from the consideration of the errors men have run into, who have set up their reason in opposition to the mysteries of nature and revelation. Many who have done this, have fully come to what the apostle Paul said of the Gentiles, Rom. i. 22. *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.* When their pride has been so great, that they would not be content with owning the great mysteries of natural religion, without explaining the manner how they are, and when their insolence has risen so high, as that they have set up their reason in opposition to the mysteries of revelation, they have showed what short-sighted creatures they are, in venting opinions as most rational, which are entirely inconsistent with right reason. Some have not been able to bring themselves to own, that the distinction of right and wrong is dependent on the will of God, they therefore have laid down this nonsensical paradox, that there are moral fitnesses in the reason and nature of things, which must be conceived as prior to the will of God; and hence it is argued, that God is as much bound by the rules of justice as any of his creatures. That there is an essential difference between right and wrong, is most certain; for if we conceive of God as an infinitely good, just, and perfect Being, all which is agreeable to his will must be right, and all which is contrary to him must be wrong: but it is perfect nonsense and self-contradiction to conceive of any thing prior, in order of nature, to the first cause; it is most shocking to imagine, that the independent Being should be circumscribed by moral fitnesses; and it is monstrous to affirm, that the sovereign Lawgiver, because he can do nothing inconsistent with his own perfections, is bound by the laws he gives,

as the rule of his rational creatures' acting. Moral fitnesses rising from the nature of things, are only the old Pagan notion of fate revived; and such as are fond of this unintelligible jargon, make very large advances towards the worst sort of Atheism. It is a dictate of right reason, which, in this case, is abundantly confirmed by revelation, that there is only one supreme, living, and true God, who is the sole Creator of all things: the Scripture confirms the voice of natural light, that there is but one God: but it most clearly reveals, that in the Unity of this Godhead, there are three divine Persons of the same substance and perfections, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: how these can be three Persons, and yet can be one God, is a thing that is not revealed, and consequently not necessary for us to know; it is above the grasp of our narrow, corrupt reason: and, in all probability, as it relates to the substance of the infinite God, it surpasses the understanding of the most perfect creatures, for that is only finite. Against this great and adorable mystery, the proud pretenders to reason rise with rage and rancour; they charge it with nonsense and contradiction: but what have these masters in buffoonery, as well as proficients in blasphemy, offered to us in the room of the true Scripture doctrine of a Trinity in Unity? In reality, nothing which will stand the test of good sense, or is agreeable to right reason. Such as have supposed the Son and the Spirit to be different names, or to be two faculties, attributes, properties, or powers of the Father, have run into a scheme, which, if it was true, the Scriptures might be said not to be written with good sense; seeing it would be strange, in narrations of facts, and in the course of reasoning and debate, to speak of the Son and Spirit in the strongest language of personality that can be invented, if they were only personalised by bold metaphors, high allegories, or strong figures of speech. But the abettors of this scheme are not those whom I principally have regard to; I chiefly refer to the patrons of the Arian heresy, who make the Son and the Spirit two creatures. These sons of darkness contradict, in the most daring manner, the fundamental doctrine of natural and revealed religion, that there is but one infinitely blessed God; for they suppose two creatures to be true and proper Gods, or to have all the characters of divinity, except supremacy, independence, and necessary existence, and so endeavour to graft upon Christianity the heathenish jargon, which it was designed to militate against, that though there is but one supreme God, there may be subordinate divinities. They most irrationally allow, that creatures may be employed with the supreme God, in creating the world, or in bringing all things besides themselves into being out of nothing, and so run into the greatest of absurdities, in supposing created creators. They likewise follow the Gentiles, who were vain in their imaginations, and whose foolish hearts were so darkened

as to worship the creature besides the Creator, who is God blessed for ever; for though they degrade the Son and Spirit into the rank of dependent beings, yet they offer up to them subordinate worship. It is certain, from reason and Scripture, that man could never create himself, but that he is the product of the Supreme Being, who by his providence sustains him, and by his bounty supplies his wants, and consequently that he is obliged to live to the glory of the Author of his being, and is accountable to him for the actions of his life: in this there is nothing but what is agreeable to the highest reason, yet such is the infatuation of the asserters of the sufficiency of the light of nature, that they reject this natural doctrine, and pretend that God did not make man for himself, is not concerned about his breaking his laws, and that he is not accountable to the Most High; so that the living God must be supposed to be an indolent being, not mindful what those who are the product of his hands do, in contempt of his authority.

If these things are duly considered, it is as insolent as it is erroneous, in the patrons of reason, to stand up for the sufficiency of it in matters of religion. However it may be in others, it is apparent that it is greatly debased in these muddy creatures, who will not make use of the common helps that are thrown in their way, to guard them against the most gross absurdities. They come under the judgment which Moses, by commission from God, threatened should come upon Israel, in case of disobedience, when he said, Deut. xxviii. 28, 29: "The Lord shall strike thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropes in darkness, and shalt not prosper in thy ways." Though reason improved by revelation proclaims, that the supreme God is our Judge and Lawgiver, that there is but one living God, who is our Creator, and who is to be worshipped by us, and that in him we live, move, and have our being, and to him must give an account of our actions; yet they shut their eyes against what light they might have, in their state of frailty and imperfection, and go about to palm upon the ignorant such irrational stuff as this,\* that there is a cause prior to the first cause; that the independent Sovereign is himself dependent: that creatures may be subordinate deities, dependent creators, to be worshipped with inferior divine worship; that He who sits at the head of the empire of providence, has brought into being rational creatures, which he made not for himself, and which are not accountable to him. Let the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason of itself, without a revelation to be a guide in religion, blush, when they show it to be so insufficient in

\* I am not concerned whether all these paradoxes have been started by any one advocate for the sufficiency of reason; it is enough, if each has been maintained by any one of the anti-scriptural faction, who yet call themselves Christians.

themselves, in bolting out such glaring absurdities; and let them no longer assume to themselves the title of men of reason, when reason is sunk so low in them. When we think on the irrational things they amuse themselves with, we cannot but see how God is secretly pleading his own cause, even by their folly; they receive not the truth in the love of it, and he in judgment gives them over to strong delusions, so that they are fond of the most senseless figments which appear in the garb of novelty. When they, through pride, cry up their own reason, to the disparagement of Scripture, they are left to dote upon irrational vanities, which are a disgrace to that very reason, which they labour, by undue methods, to advance to a height to which it can never justly be raised.

The treacherous betrayers of revelation, who stand up for the sufficiency of natural religion, would not appear to renounce the Christian doctrine, which they really give up into the hands of the Deists, its implacable enemies, and therefore they pretend to give full proof of the sufficiency of human reason in matters of religion, from Scripture itself. Had there been such proof, it must have been owned to have been strange; for then Scripture would have declared itself not to have been absolutely necessary for the uses of men; but the case is far from being what these inaccurate blunderers would give out. They appear only to have cast their eyes on some passages of sacred writ, and to have laid hold of them, as in sound, seeming to countenance their cause, but not to have considered the texts they bring in connexion with the context. In their manner of quoting Scripture, they imitate exactly the father of lies, who when he tempted the God of truth manifested in the flesh, cited Scripture only to curtail it, and to wrest it from its genuine sense. Their arguments are so mean, that a person almost needs pardon who goes about to answer them; however, let us see what they have to say to keep their wretched cause in countenance, and to fence off conviction from themselves.

It is insolently said,\* that the doctrine of the sufficiency of human reason is the doctrine of the apostle Peter, who said thus, Acts x. 34, 35, with respect to Cornelius, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted of him." From hence this strange inference is drawn, that it appears, that, in every heathen nation, they who followed the light of their natural reason and conscience, feared God; whence it follows, that in the judgment of the apostle, every heathen, by the light of natural reason, had a sufficient guide to lead him to the religious fear of God. Now, nothing can be more contrary to the apostle's sense than this: he did not speak of heathen, who were left to the bare light of nature, being able, by the help

\* Plea for Human Reason, p. 49, 50.

of that, to fear God; but he owned his conviction, that salvation by Christ was not to be confined to the Jewish nation, but was to be made known to the Gentile world. Cornelius was one of good report among the Jews, or one who was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, but was not circumcised, being one of those who were called proselytes of the gate, and so he had the Scriptures of the Old Testament to instruct him, and was not left to the bare light of nature. Besides, when he, under some doubt, prayed for illumination, he was directed, by an angel appearing to him to apply himself to the apostle Peter for instruction, which is a certain evidence, that his natural light was not a sufficient guide: in all probability the thing he desired to be informed in, was the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth; because, when Peter came to instruct him, Acts x. 36, 41, 42, he declared Christ's supreme Deity, or that he is Lord of all; he asserted the truth of his resurrection, of which he had been an eye-witness, having ate, drunk, and freely conversed with his risen Master; and he showed him, that this Jesus who died, rose and revived, was ordained to be Judge of the quick and dead. These were things which the light of nature never taught; yet they were matters in which the great apostle thought it was necessary to instruct Cornelius and his friends. A man must then have a very odd turn of head, who can bring himself to fancy, that Peter judged the light of nature was sufficient to guide those whom he instructed in things above it, into the religious fear of God. Had the case been so, Cornelius would not have needed to have been directed by an angel to send for Peter, in order to show him what it was that God would have him to do.

We are told,\* that seeing the apostle Paul, Rom. ii. 10, has declared, that "glory, honour, and peace, would be to every one that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile," it follows, that the law of reason, by which they were to be finally judged, was a sufficient guide in matters of religion and salvation, to those who knew not the gospel: but it is amazing, that such masters of reason could not see, that the apostle here spake of such Jews and Gentiles as had received the Christian faith; for he intimated as plainly as words could do it, that the persons he had mentioned, Jews as well as Gentiles, were to be judged, as to their sincerity, or "the secrets of their hearts, according to the gospel which he had preached." Rom. ii. 16. Whether it was from the stupidity of these perverse disputers, that they could not see this, or whether it was from their knavery, that they would not see it, is not easy to be determined; they may choose which they please. The apostle had not respect to such as knew not the gospel, but to such as had received it, and made a profession of it; and it is mere ignorance to take

\* Plea for Human Reason, p. 50, 51.

him as owning the light of nature to be a sufficient guide, as well as great conceit, to put off such blundering stuff for argument.

It is further pleaded,\* that the same apostle Paul has said, Hebrews xi. 6, "He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." From hence a conclusion is drawn, that if reason, or the law of nature, has the sanction of rewards and punishments annexed to it, it must follow, that it is a sufficient guide in matters of religion. These deceivers, when they urged this text, took care to suppress the words immediately preceding those they have alleged, "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" in which it is most certain, the apostle meant faith in God, as reconciled in and through Christ; and faith in Christ as a Mediator, which is a thing not known by the light of nature. Without faith in Christ, it is not possible for any to be acceptable to God; for whoever comes to him, so as to meet with a kind reception, must believe that he is a just and a holy God, and as such can only reward his fallen creatures, who diligently seek him, in and through a Mediator, on the account of his merit, and not on the account of any fancied desert in them; seeing they are so far from laying him under any obligation by what their hands can find to do, that they would not be able to answer for the sins that cleave to their best performances, if he was to deal with them as an absolute God.

To take notice but of one thing more, the sufficiency of reason to be man's guide, is urged,† from the wise king Solomon's declaring, Ecclesiastes vii. 29, that "God made man upright:" but this truly great master of reason knew better; for he declared it to be the result of his long and diligent search after wisdom, that reason is not a sufficient guide, by reason of man's apostasy from God, by which it is corrupted: his words are, "This only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." The latter part of the words the antisciptural tribe have suppressed, as if they could not quote Scripture in a way different from the author of evil. "God made man upright;" his understanding was without sinful defects, but in his primeval state his reason was not a sufficient rule, for he needed instruction from God; the case of his posterity is worse, their reason is depraved and corrupted; they not only are ignorant of many things, but they are prone to follow errors, to run into dangerous mistakes, and to please themselves with many idle inventions; among which this is not the least pernicious, that sinful creatures should have the impudence to assert, that reason or the light of nature, in their present state is a sufficient guide to them in religious matters.

\* Plea, p. 51, 52.

† Plea, p. 53.



## APPLICATION.

Seeing pride is at the bottom of all the opposition which is made to the revelation afforded us by God, and seeing it is this makes vain and conceited men cry up reason as a perfect rule, to the disparagement of revelation, it cannot be an unseasonable admonition to professed Christians, nay, to all who pretend to be searching after truth, to be careful how they give way to a proud conceit of their own understandings. The high thoughts which creatures have entertained of their own intellectual abilities, have been the source and spring of all the apostasy and rebellion against the Most High, which we have been acquainted with. Whatever was the particular sin, which occasioned the thrusting of Satan, and all the legions of the heavenly hosts, which banded under his ensigns against the Highest, down from Heaven, it is pretty certain that it took its rise from pride. This we may easily gather from a passage of the apostle Paul, wherein he prescribes it as a standing rule, that a bishop, or pastor of a gospel church, must not be a *novice*, which is not so much meant of one young in years, as of one who had newly taken up a profession of the Christian faith, and was but raw in the knowledge of the doctrines of revelation. The reason why a pastor ought not to be a *novice* is, 1 Tim. iii. 6, "Lest being lifted up, or blown up, with pride, he should fall into the condemnation of the devil." If pride was the cause of the devil's condemnation, it must be twisted with his first sin. It was a proud imagination, that they could make their condition better than that in which the wisdom of a beneficent Creator had placed them, which drew a great number of the potentates of heaven to rise in rebellious arms against the God from whom they received their being; and it was a vain desire of being higher than they were made by the sovereign Lord of nature, that engaged thousands of angels in impious league against their King, for which they were cast out of heaven, and are doomed to spend eternal ages in wo and pain; they are now suffered to range about the world, but still they are, as it were, in chains: but, at the last and the great day, they will receive fulness of torment; and, being shut up in hell, they will groan for ever under the weight of almighty vengeance, which will glorify itself in punishing them for their pride and rebellion. It was also pride which was the source of the wo we feel, by reason of the fall of our first parents. It does not appear, from the Scripture account of the first apostasy of man, that the devil could plant any temptation on our progenitors, till he had blown them up to a proud conceit, that they could make their condition happier than it was, by transgressing the law of their Creator. When the tempter attacked our general mother, Gen. iii. 56, as he endeavoured to work her up to an imagination, that it was

through envy that God had debarred her husband and her from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, lest they should be like him in knowledge, he laboured to raise pride in her by assuring her, that if she once tasted of the fruit which she feared to touch, she should tower to divinity, or be like God in knowledge. What he urged was this: "God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." It was this sly suggestion that made the first of women look with eager longing eyes on the goodly fruit, which hung on the forbidden tree; and it was a persuasion that she should rise in knowledge, which induced her, in an evil hour, to reach forth her rash hand, to pluck and eat what plunged her into ruin. And it is very likely, by urging the arguments which the devil had used to induce her to undo herself, that she prevailed on our common father to follow her example, out of a vain conceit of having a part with her in her imagined happiness, and so to complete the first transgression.

It must be owned, that our first parents did gain knowledge by eating the forbidden fruit, but it was knowledge they had better have been without; it was an experimental knowledge of what was evil. They soon found their eyes opened; but what was this to discover? It was to show them, that their minds were darkened; that innocence, which, as a veil, had shaded them from knowing ill, was gone; that they had lost the image of their mighty Maker, which before shone in them in wisdom, and severe and pure sanctity; that they were stripped of their just confidence, primitive integrity, original righteousness, and native honour; and that they were left naked to guilty shame. This was the unhappy prospect which presented itself to them, when they first opened their eyes to behold evil; and this knowledge may be said to be dearly bought, by the loss of pleasures and joys which were sufficient to satiate their craving desires, and would, if they had continued in honour, have lasted for ever.

Thus we find from Scripture, that pride and self-sufficiency have been the causes of all the evils which have infested the intellectual world; of the apostasy of many thousands of the princes of light, and of the defection of our first parents, by which sin and woe have been entailed on us their unhappy posterity; and when we see such direful effects following pride, if we regard our true interest, we shall stand at a distance from a sin that is so affronting to God. When men cry up the sufficiency of reason; when they refuse to assent to the mysteries of revelation, because they cannot comprehend the manner of them; and when they will not be content without being wise above what is written; they only follow the example of the angels that sinned, and of the first man, who, when he was in honour, continued not, but made himself and his posterity more

miserable than the brutes that perish: they show they are under the influence of that impure apostate spirit, who seduced their first parents to break the covenant with their God, and that they are the true descendants of the unhappy pair, who lost their primeval glory, out of a foolish desire of being independent of God, and knowing more than he thought fit to reveal.

Considering these things, let us not be lifted up with pride, on the account of our rational attainments, but let us be humbled from a sense of the imperfection of our reason, and let a sense of this imperfection put us upon thinking on our fall and apostasy from God: let us be thankful that we are not left to the dim light of nature, but that we have a more sure directory, in the written law of God, than could be obtained by us, if we were left to the guidance of our own reason: let us prize and value the Scriptures, which give us an account of our salvation by Christ; let us search into them, and, with reverence, receive the mysteries which are revealed in them, which may be above our full comprehension; but let us never attempt to be wise above what is written, by affecting to know the mode of these mysteries which is not revealed; and let us, at all times, be much in prayer to the Holy Spirit, that he would give us light into those great things of God, which the natural man receives not, but accounts foolishness, and which the man of mere rational attainments will never know, because they are spiritually discerned.

Now to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three divine Persons, but one King eternal, immortal, invisible, and the only wise God, be honour and glory ascribed, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

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## SERMON II.

ROM. i. 22.—Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

If we take for true the Scripture account of the fall of our first parents, we shall find, that the desire of knowing more than God had revealed, was the spring of that apostasy from the Author of blessedness, the sad effects of which defection we now feel, and shall feel as long as we continue our journey through this tiresome wilderness; where we meet with very little that is truly comfortable, but are forced, after climbing up rocks of perils, to descend and stray through vales of tears. Had our common parents been content with their happy lot, sin, and its concomitant, death, had never entered the world; we should have had no trouble to grieve us, nor afflictions to harass and distress us, but we should have spent our easy hours in blessing and praising the beneficent Creator, and our time

would have pleasantly glided away in the service of our mighty Potentate, that gave us our being; who would have made every thing about us to have tended to our comfort. When man was clad in honour, and was a happy creature, he was not content with his desirable station, but aspired after an independence on his Maker; he was ambitious to be as God, knowing good and evil; he vainly thought, by gratifying his own will, to tower to divinity, and by transgressing the law of his supreme Lord, to be like him in knowledge: but, alas! he was greatly mistaken; he lost the knowledge of what is good, and to his cost, found that he had acquired the experimental knowledge of what was evil. As we partake of the curse which he entailed upon us, so the temper which prevailed in him, when he first imagined that it was out of envy, lest he should become his equal, that God had debarred him the fruit of one tree, has the predominance in all his miserable posterity, if they are left to themselves, and are given up to the guidance of their imperfect reason. Pride so much possesses the heart of men, in their degenerate state, that though they can never bring themselves to believe they are stronger than God, and able to cast him from his throne, yet they evidence that they grieve to see his glory, and earnestly desire to be independent on him. Were not the disputers of this world swayed by obdurate pride, and were not their hearts filled with envy, hatred, and rancour against God, then would they ever suggest that they are not accountable to that Supreme Being who created them, who preserves them from outward harms and dangers, and whose goodness keeps them every moment from death and destruction? What detestable arrogance is it for the contemptible reptiles of the earth to say, that he who formed out of nothing, has not any thing to do with those on whom he has bestowed an existence! Yet to such a height is daring infidelity come, that reason must be set up as a perfect rule, though men are granted to be more swayed by their passions than by reason, and the distinctions of right and wrong are given out to be independent on the will of God, and to be founded on we know not what nature of things.

What has been of late advanced in favour of reason, amounts to no more than this: Reason ought to be a perfect rule, therefore it is a perfect rule; and a perfect rule needs no addition; therefore all which God has revealed, which reason could not have found out, is impertinent and needless. If this matter is brought to a fair trial, the religion of nature must not be considered as men have pieced it up, by the help of Scripture, but in the state in which it has been among able, thinking, and polished men, who had no other helps than such as reason furnished them with, and had no correspondence with such as had their reason enlarged by the help of the oracles of God. And

if it is thus weighed, which is weighing it in the balance of truth and justice, it will be found wanting. They who have made the greatest improvements in natural religion, were quite confounded as to many points, which must be owned to be of the utmost consequence, and the last concern to men in their depraved state.

If we were fairly to examine the matter of fact, or consider how sufficient or insufficient the light of nature has appeared to be, we should confine ourselves strictly to such as we have the firmest evidence to conclude were left without any assistance gained by intercourse with those who had the benefit of revelation, or even by commerce with them that had an opportunity to borrow a little light from them. If we were to take the standard of the light of nature from such nations as the Chinese, and the inhabitants of Japan, though we must allow them to be as well bred people, as nice and curious in the manual arts, and as completely skilled in trade, as any of the polished nations of the West, yet we should find they have run into the most gross and irrational errors about the worship of God; and though some good moral precepts have been delivered by Zanzu, or Confucius, yet many vile notions, as to practical duties, are received among them. We know not what intercourse there might be formerly between them and the eastern nations, that lay nearer to the places which were the seats of true knowledge; so that it cannot be said, that what good things they receive, they found out without help. The easiest way to judge, whether reason, in the present state of mankind, is a sufficient rule in matters of religion, is to examine how far it is a guide to the aborigines of North America, who had no commerce with any other nations before the Europeans settled there, and had no helps further than what nature dictated. If reason is viewed as it exerts itself in them, who yet are a quick, and not a stupid sort of people, it will appear to be far from being a sufficient guide.

When we consent to try the merits of the cause by the writings of such pagans as lived in Greece and at Rome, before Christ, it is allowing more than the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason can demand of us. After Cyrus, king of Persia, had conquered Cræsus, king of Lydia, and made Asia the Less a province of his great dominions, there was more intercourse between the eastern nations and the Greeks, than was before. We have only two pagan writers before this period, Homer and Hesiod, who embraced the system of theology invented by Orpheus; and as he had borrowed some things from the Egyptians, which they had from the Israelites, so, in the writings of these two poets, there are some traces of Eastern knowledge. After Cyrus's time, the Greeks knew more of the eastern affairs than before, and some of their most eminent philosophers, and

most ancient writers, travelled into Syria and Egypt; so that it is no wonder if we find some things in them, consonant to what we meet with in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Joseph, in his apology for the Jewish religion, Justin, Tatian, Theophilus, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, and Origen, in their defences of Christianity, charged the pagans with borrowing their best notions from the Old Testament, and arraigned them for ingratitude, for not owning from whence they had assistance; the same matter was more distinctly pursued by the learned Clement of Alexandria, by Lactantius, and the great Eusebius: but none among the ancients have handled this point with more judgment than that rational and polite divine, Theodoret; he has left us an admirable treatise,\* wherein he, with a great deal of strength of argument, with an agreeable variety of learning, and in most elegant and nervous diction, has proved that the most celebrated philosophers among the Greeks had borrowed their most elevated speculations concerning the true God, from the Jews.† The Romans had all their philosophy from the Greeks, so that they only have copied out such as were but copies themselves. It is, therefore, making further concessions than we are obliged to do, for us to take the ancient Greek and Roman letters for the standard by which we judge of the insufficiency of reason.

However, if we find, that, notwithstanding the helps the ancient pagans had, natural religion was far from being a sufficient guide, in sacred matters, our cause will not lose, but gain, by thus trying reason. I shall wave considering what improvements were made by such writers as Seneca, Epictetus, Arrian, the emperor Antoninus, or the later Platonists, because they lived after Christianity was spread over the world; and, as the modern delineators of natural religion have since done, took from thence what they liked. I shall confine myself principally, though not wholly, to what Socrates's scholars have preserved from him, and to the writings of Plato. It must be owned, these two men had far better notions, as to some things, than any of the other heathen; but yet they, and all other pagans, had very dark and obscure conceptions about the unity and worship of God, the creation of the world, the corruption of mankind, the way to be reconciled to an offended God, the nature of virtue, and a future state. These are points which are of the utmost concern to all persons, at all times; as to these, the wisest among the Gentiles were puzzled and perplexed, which would not have been the case, if natural religion had been a sufficient guide. That they were actually at a loss

\* His *Therapeutics* in twelve books, in the fourth volume of his works.

† This matter has, since my engaging in this subject, been well stated by my worthy and learned friend, Dr. Waterland, in his charge to the clergy of Middlesex, p. 10, &c.

about these momentous things, will clearly appear, if we take an impartial survey.

I. The light of nature convinces men that there is *one supreme Being*, who brought all other beings into existence, and that he is to be worshipped; but when men have been left to bare reason, without supernatural aids, they have had very obscure notions of this one supreme God, and have run into things really inconsistent with the belief of the one Supreme, though at the same time they were forced to own there was such an one.

It is certain, from the light of nature, that there is a God, possessed of infinite perfections. The works of creation proclaim their great original. If we look to the sun, that fountain of light and heat, we must own that it was One of infinite power, who prepared a tabernacle for it, that its influence might be conveyed to the heavenly bodies which move round it; if we consider the planets, which with regular motions, revolve about it, we cannot but confess the wisdom of Him who made them, who nicely adjusted their distances, that they might not disturb one another in their motions, and who enables them to perform their several revolutions. It was an almighty arm that first slung forth those great bodies, which have been kept from following the propensity of gravity, to fall to their centre, by the projectile force impressed upon them by an all-powerful hand. If we take a survey of the earth on which we tread, we see in it such footsteps of skill, power and contrivance, that we cannot but say, the hand which made it is divine; it must be one of skill who has enriched it with the beautiful and useful variety of land and sea, plains and rivers, hills and vales, trees and flowers, corn and fruit, shady groves and crystal springs, painted meadows and purling streams: every part of the inanimate creation, which raises pleasure in our imagination, may prove the being of God to us; whether it be the beautiful and variegated profusion of flowers that adorn the delightful gardens, the gay enamel that paints the agreeable meadows, or the curious drapery that vests the shady groves. If we consider the tribes of brute creatures, they manifest to us the greatness of their Maker: if we regard ourselves, we cannot but say we are fearfully and wonderfully made; therefore when we ruminate on the exquisite art, and consummate workmanship, which is laid out in the formation of our bodies, and on the nobler part of us, that thinking, intelligent substance, that distinguishes us from brutes, we cannot but conclude that we have a Creator of infinite power.

When we think on the works of nature, with any exactness, we cannot but conclude that there is a supreme Potentate, who made and upholds the heavens, Acts xiv. 15—17, and xvii. 25—28, the earth, the seas, and all things therein, who gives to all life and breath, in whom we live, move, and have our being,

and who has not left himself without witness to the consciences of any, seeing, by his bounty, he sustains the sons of men, and fills their hearts with food and gladness. This has been the belief of all refined nations; and it has not been proved,\* that any people have been yet discovered, who are so over-run with ignorance and barbarism, as to have no notion of a power above them. David has, indeed, told us, Psalm xiv. 1, that, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God;" but this may be understood of his secret wishing that there was no God, and being ready sometimes to flatter himself with the hopes that things are as he wishes: or rather, this fool of nature may be reckoned a person who has denied his reason so far, as to bring himself to believe, that he was not made by God for himself, and that he has no motive, on his own account, to give him laws, and to punish the breach of them, and that consequently he is not accountable to him.

We have a very pregnant and melancholy proof of the imperfection of the light of nature, since the fall, in the unworthy representations some of the heathen world gave of God, and the hideous and blemishing fictions they invented concerning him. Though they knew him in part from his works, they glorified him not as God, but grew vain in their imaginations, and introduced a rabble of inferior deities, whom they represented as not free from vicious passions, and they acted so much beneath the dignity of human nature, as to bow down before stones and logs. They worshipped the creature, besides the Creator, that is, with subordinate worship, and so invented the irrational scheme of subordinate gods, and inferior worship, which has been so much applauded for refined reason, by many of their foolish disciples, who call themselves Christians. The picture of the ancient heathens is most admirably drawn by the apostle Paul, that great demolisher of paganism, in the following words, Rom. i. 19—23. 25; "What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has showed it them; for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and

\* The Atheists have boasted of their having found out a people who have no notion of a superior power, the Hottentots about the Cape of Good Hope. We need not much grudge them the honour of having their opinions patronized by those who are, as far as we know, the most beastly and lazy of the human race; but, however, they are not so far brutified, as to have no belief of any thing above them: as any one may find, who consults M. Kolben's account of the Cape of Good Hope.



to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature besides the Creator, who is God blessed for ever." What can show more the insufficiency of the light of nature, to be a rule to men in matters of religion, than this, that such as were convinced from the works of God that there was a supreme God, of eternal power, should venture to worship with him, and besides him, idols, and that not only images of men, the noblest creatures of the lower world, but besides these, logs of wood, and blocks of marble cut into the shapes of the most contemptible creatures, such as serpents, nay, of monsters, such as are only the creatures of fancy, and have no existence in nature. And this was done not only by the rude vulgar, but by the politest men among the pagans.

It must be owned, that some of the pagans have spoken admirably well concerning the supreme God,\* and have described him in a worthier manner, than many who might have used the advantage of a better light, who suppose that we are to have no further notion of God, than of one invested with dominion. This shows, that though the light of nature, by which men have a notion of God is much eclipsed, by the darkness introduced by the fall, yet it is not quite extinguished. But though the pagans have said a great many good things about the Supreme, yet they never had any notion how affronting it was to the universal and sole Potentate, to have any part of his glory given to others. We have many noble passages remaining, both of the poets and philosophers, which show that the knowledge of a God of infinite perfections, was not quite obliterated, which it would be endless to produce; but we do not find that this rational light, which, on some accounts, shined in them with great clearness, was sufficient to keep them from running into most gross absurdities. We may be contented, on this head, and on others, to take a view of the sentiments of Socrates, who has been styled a martyr for the unity of God; and has been, by a late writer,† whose pretended religion was

\* I might have given here testimonies from the ancients, especially from the poets, wherein they have spoken exceedingly well of the supreme God; but I have formerly collected many of the most remarkable passages, and thrown them into the margin of my Treatise of Faith, p. 12—17, thither therefore I shall beg leave to refer the reader.

† The late Dr. Samuel Clarke, whose mean low words are these following: "There have been in almost every age, in the heathen world, some wise, and brave, and good men, who have made it their business to study and practise the duties of natural religion themselves, and to teach and exhort others to do the like. An eminent instance whereof, in the eastern nations, the Scripture affords us in the history of Job.—Among the Greeks, Socrates seems to be an extraordinary example of this kind."—*Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, Prop. VI. It will appear that there was no room for this betrayer of revelation to depress Job so far, as to make him an instance of the same kind with Socrates, if we consider that the heathen philosopher died as a fool dieth, using this mean expression; 'Crito, we are indebted a cock to Æsculapius; offer it, and do not

only the Bible, very profanely set in the same rank with Job. This man, it must be owned, was a judicious observer of men's actions; and, as he studied human nature exactly, so he did not set himself to frame schemes in private, which was the ruin of most of the other old philosophers: in this he took as good a method, as could be expected from one in his circumstances, and did not run into such great absurdities, as most other heathens. In a conversation with an atheist, he argued for the being of a God, from the wisdom and skill which are to be seen in the works of nature, especially in the formation of man's body; and, when he came to a closer reasoning with him, he used this warm manner: "Have you any degree of knowledge? Do you think there is no superior knowledge elsewhere? Can you think that the great and innumerable wonders of your frame were put into such a beautiful order, merely by blind chance?" When the infidel objected that he could not see the author of nature, the philosopher answered, that the objector could not see his own soul, which animated and governed his body; so that he might as well say that it was merely by chance, and not by design, that he performed all rational, as well as animal functions. This disputer was not able to maintain that there was no God, but only would have insinuated that God had not made man for himself, or designed him to be accountable to him; he did not despise a God, but he thought he was too glorious a being to need his worship: he had a good answer to this, that the greater and more glorious the Being was which deigned to take care of him, the more he ought to honour him. When he replied, that he did not think that God took care of human affairs, he was well confuted by what might be seen of God's care, concerning man, in ordering the members of his body in such a manner, as showed him to be more the favourite of providence than any of the brute creatures, in giving him an upright posture, and the use of speech; and, above this, by what might be observed of the divine kindness, in giving man a rational soul, of a noble nature, capable of discerning the works of providence, and the divine proceedings, as to worldly matters, and fitted to conduct the body, as to the common affairs of life; that man may guard against hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and sickness, that he may acquire knowledge, and keep in memory what he has attained. When it was objected, that it was not likely that God should see and know all things, it was well replied in these words; "Your soul, whilst in the body, governs it at its will, therefore it may be concluded that the wisdom which resides in the universe, governs all things at pleasure; your eye can take in the forget." Whereas the Scripture here had the light to make the following noble declaration; "If I had beheld the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in brightness, and my heart had been secretly enticed, or my mouth had kissed my hand, this had been an iniquity to have been punished by the magistrate, for I should have denied the God that is above." Job xxxi. 26—28.

compass of some furlongs, and cannot the eye of God view all things at once? Your mind can think of the state of affairs in different parts of the world, and cannot the wisdom of God take care of all things? If you will wait for divine direction to guide you into things which carry an obscure face, you will know that the Deity is so great as to be able to see and hear all things, to be present every where, and to take the care of all things." Reason dictated to this man more than it does to some of our modern pleaders for its perfection, yet in him it was wofully deficient; for he joined in the worship of false gods, and pleaded for omens, divinations by sacrifices, and birds; and, when he came to die, for his having a little better notion of the divine Being than his contemporaries, he dishonourably finished his course, with desiring his friends to fulfil a vow for him, which was to offer a cock to the feigned power of health.

Some of the wiser pagans owned, that God was the Creator of all things; and whencesoever they had their light, whether by tradition, or conversation in the east, some of them allowed that the world was formed out of a confused chaos, but they were frank to confess, that they knew not which of the gods it was, that condescended to take the trouble to raise the beautiful fabric of the world, out of a rude indigested heap, and to bring order out of confusion. This was only the notion of some; for others held, with a noted modern, that the world was God; others, with one of our country, imagined that all things were by fatal necessity, and that, by the nature of things, every thing is which is; others fancied, that the world was co-eternal with God, a necessary emanation from him, or that matter was from eternity; others framed a notion of God, as a happy, lazy, indolent Being, who was not concerned in the creation, or government of the world, but enjoyed himself in supine ease; they supposed, that the world was framed by the casual hitting or jumbling of atoms, and that men had nothing to do, but to consult their own ease, to which some added, how to be inoffensive to others. It may be easily guessed, from this short sketch, that none of the absurd opinions, which the later times have been pestered with, are the growth of the more recent ages, but that they have been advanced and baffled long before this; and we need not question, but they may be often introduced afresh, and as often hissed off the stage, before the end of the world. It might be a help to some giddy persons to know, that there is nothing in error which is really new; if they could be brought to believe this, they would not receive every absurdity that carries a new face.

The providence of God was acknowledged by many, nay, by most of the heathen, but they knew little of God's designs in afflicting a virtuous man, and suffering a vicious person to prosper; therefore some, being puzzled how to account for these

things, framed a notion of two contrary principles,\* one good, and another evil; to the latter they ascribed the troubles of the virtuous. These two principles were supposed to act in continual opposition one to another, and so to occasion all the confusion which is in the world. This irrational notion is inconsistent with the owning one infinitely supreme Being, yet it met with a reception among some who were much civilized; and the remains of it are to be found among some ruder nations at this day.

If matters were always thus, it is a monstrous insult on common sense for our modern betrayers of the Christian cause,† into the hands of infidels, to tell us, that by the religion of nature men know what God is, and how he is to be worshipped. That God is to be worshipped, is the dictate of reason, and it has so striking a force upon the generality of men, that they will invent the most monstrous forms of worship, rather than not worship at all. A blockish idolater will have a log to crouch to, rather than be without a God; and some have been ready to sacrifice their fellow creatures, nay, their children, to avoid being reckoned despisers of their false deities. They must be stupid to an amazing degree, and must only scribble for idiots, who can imagine, that any will believe them, who have examined the world, when they say, natural religion teaches them how to worship God. If we look into all the pagan nations, we shall find, that conviction of the necessity of worshipping what they reckoned to be divine, and an entire ignorance how God is to be worshipped, was the cause of all those absurd, ridiculous, cruel, and sanguinary ways of worship which they fell into, and so showed that they were without excuse, in that when they knew God, from his works, they glorified him not as God.

II. If men consult their *own hearts*, they must needs find in themselves too strong a bias towards what is evil, and so must conclude from experience, that man is in a *state of corruption*; seeing it cannot be thought, that he came at first out of his Maker's hands, with principles of rebellion infused into him, by the power that bestowed on him his being. Though, by the light of nature, men have been convinced of their corruption, yet such as were left to it alone, had only confused notions about it, and so knew not how to reconcile the purity of God to the corruption of man. The pagans, no doubt, had some traditionary hints about the apostasy of the angels, and the primitive pure state of man, which gave birth to the fables of the giants' war against heaven, and the golden age; but

\* This notion was adopted by no less a person than Zerdusht, or Zoroaster, who, by the help of the prophetic writings, reformed, in some degree, the ancient Persian religion.—Vide Hyde de Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 9.

† See the defence of the Answer to Dr. Waterland's Remarks on Clark's Exposition of the Catechism, said to be written by Sykes, p. 96.

their notions were so confused, that every one reckoned himself at liberty to clothe them with what dress he pleased. Their fancy, that the golden age was ended, by the God that then ruled, as supreme, being driven from the reins of empire, by his son, shows how poor a light that of nature alone is. That we may not seem to charge those things as a defect in natural religion, which may be called dreams of the poets, let us examine the sentiments of Plato, the wisest and most penetrating philosopher among the heathens, on this head. He has told us, that in the primitive state, God governed the whole world immediately himself, and not as it is now, by inferior deities; that demons, or inferior spirits, as shepherds, had the care of the living creatures, which they ranged in due order; that there was then no ravaging or violence, war or commotion in the earth; that God was the common guardian of men, and took care of their sustenance; that there was no need of civil society in those happy days; that men sprung out of the earth as trees; that the fields yielded fruit without tillage; and that the air was so temperate, that there was no need of clothes. He has then acquainted us, that, after a time, the supreme God laid aside the reins of his empire, and retired, and with him all the inferior deities, who governed under him; that upon this the world was convulsed, and lost its beauty, and right and wrong were confounded; that these things will grow worse, till he who first governed the world, shall reduce it to a better state. This low and contemptible stuff is the utmost we can get, from such as were left to the light of nature, who yet had the help of eastern tradition. The same writer, in order to give an account of the origin of moral evil, has told us, that some of the inferior divinities, who fly after the chariot of the Supreme, taking up with sensual enjoyments, instead of contemplating truth, lose their wings, grow sluggish, and fall down to earth, in order to animate some human body; those who are least depraved, animate the bodies of philosophers, and those most depraved, the bodies of tyrants and oppressors; that after ten thousand years, the worst souls are restored, and recover their wings. Any one may perceive how unworthy these poor and mean fictions are of reason, when the least improved by the help of Scripture: yet these dreams, shocking as they are, were the amusement of men of the clearest heads in the pagan world. They show, however, that they were convinced that the present state of man was a state of corruption, and that it was not so with him in his first state, from which he fell, but they knew not how. It is from Scripture alone that we gain the knowledge that God made man upright, and entered into a covenant with him, to preserve him in happiness, in case of constant and perpetual obedience; but he, being left to the freedom of his own will, and desiring to be equal to, and independent of his

kind and bountiful Creator, broke the law of his God, and, with the loss of all that was good, gained the experience of all evil, exposed himself to death, and procured to himself the desert of everlasting misery. If men are left without this knowledge, they are puzzled and confounded, when they compare themselves with God: if they believe that God is pure and holy, they may be apt to question, whether such impure beings, as they are, have their being immediately from God; if they are satisfied that they came from God, and yet see in themselves so much ill, they may be ready to suppose, with the gross of the ancient heathen, that the nature of God is not pure; in short, the more they inquire, the more they will be lost and bewildered in the fruitless search.

III. If men are once convinced that they are in a state of corruption, and obnoxious to the anger of God, the light of nature might make them sensible, that they ought to use all means and methods to be *restored to his favour*. Accordingly all who had no other religion than that of nature, showed that they would have rejoiced in any way, that might have been sufficient to reconcile them to the supreme Being, whose anger they feared, and whose favour they desired. Could men think that their worldly substance, or their giving up what is dearest to them, would restore them to happiness, we may imagine them ready enough to sacrifice all: accordingly, in all nations, we find persons who have not stuck at endeavouring to appease God, by thousands of oxen, and ten thousands of rams; they have, as it were, poured forth oil and wine in rivers, that, if possible, their transgressions might be carried away. A desire of appeasing God gave rise to some most detestable superstitions; in order to avert his anger, they stuck not to offer their enemies as sacrifices; nay, many have yielded themselves up to the stroke of death, that they might give their flesh for their transgression. They could willingly give a firstborn, an only child, all the fruit of their bodies, for the sin of their souls; and they could, without sorrow, see their infants burnt alive, in hopes of appeasing an angry superior power. This shows how imperfect reason is in men, that they should think such things might render them pleasing to God, as should make them hateful to all who have any bowels of compassion.

It has been surmised by some, that the pagans had an obscure notion of God's appearing in the world to restore it, because several nations have represented their supreme God as having a son, who, under various names, is represented as a deliverer of men. This might take its rise from some remains of tradition; but it does not seem that much can be made of this, for the gods and heroes, the sons of the Supreme, who were called deliverers, were represented to have done their work in past ages, which was only to kill monsters, and to dethrone tyrants.

Here are no evident traces of the way of salvation by the Son of God. As this is the glory of the Scripture scheme, so it is revelation alone that could inform us of it. It is, therefore, extremely surprising that any,\* who profess themselves Christians, can venture to say that natural religion will show how men, being placed in the circumstances they are, full of passion, full of infirmities, and surrounded with variety of temptations of all sorts, may be reconciled to, and accepted by God. This is odd language to come out of the mouths of any who call themselves Christians. Were the case so, it might well be said, any divine revelation would be needless; but, alas! it is only insulting common sense to tell us so. It is only revelation can make known to us the way of our recovery from ruin; without this, endless doubts would infest our minds, and terrors would fill our thoughts. We may a little amuse ourselves with the notion of God's being a God of infinite mercy and benevolence; or, as some take the insolent freedom to speak of their Maker, that he is a good-natured being: but this will yield little comfort to a guilty mind; for as his justice is provoked, right reason, if we attend to it, will convince us *that* must be satisfied, in a way worthy of a God of infinite perfection, before goodness is extended to us. The justice of God is as dear to him as his mercy; and can we think he will injure it, or make it clash with his mercy, merely to save such as have rendered themselves obnoxious to his displeasure, and unworthy of his favour? Scripture has declared to us that God has effected the salvation of men by sending his Son in our nature, that, by the obedience of his life and death, he might atone for our sins, and procure for us a right and title to the favour of our Judge. In this method, he has caused all his perfections to act in harmony; his justice is satisfied by the death of the Surety of men; his holiness is showed in his hating sin, so as not to remit it, without punishment; his truth is established, in that his threatening is fulfilled; and at the same time, his mercy, love, and goodness, appear in the fairest colours, in that apostate man is restored to greater happiness than was lost by the fall. These were things unknown to such as enjoyed no more than the bare light of nature, who could be in no other than a desponding state, as to pardon of sin, and the favour of God. Their condition must be unhappy, because they were convinced of their need of pardon, but knew not where to apply in order to obtain it.

Some have thought that the pagans were not entirely without a notion of a Saviour coming into the world, to instruct mankind about their duty, from a remarkable passage in one of Plato's dialogues: he has introduced Socrates warning one against falling in with the gross absurdities which some run into in their prayers. To which he added: "It is necessary to wait

\* See the defence of the Answer to Dr. Waterland, p. 96.

till some one teach how to behave ourselves towards God and towards men." On his being thus asked, "When will this time come, and who will be this teacher? It will be very delightful to see such a one, whoever he is." He answered: "It is he that takes care of you: but the mist ought to be removed from your mind, which now overspreads it, and those means afforded which are necessary for your knowing good and evil, of which you do not now seem capable." To this the reply was, "Let him remove the mist if he pleases, and do any other thing; I am prepared to neglect nothing commanded by him, whoever he is, provided I may grow better." The rejoinder was, "He takes care of you in a wonderful manner." This has been produced with great pomp, as if it was a decisive proof that the heathen, by bare natural light, found out how good men were to be reconciled to God. It is certain that the author of this passage travelled into the east, where, it is very probable, he picked up this notion, which he refers to in many other passages of his works, by saying positive determinations of some matters must be left till some one come and instruct us. The utmost that can be made of this is, the ignorance of mankind was so great, that this man was satisfied of the need there was for some instructor to come into the world, to teach men their duty; but it does not appear that he had a distinct knowledge of the person who was to do it, or of the method he was to take, in order to accomplish man's happiness. The information men have of the way of salvation by the Son of God, is not what is to be obtained from the light of nature; we could never have known that God would be reconciled to us, if he had not so told us; much less could we have thought on the method which one of infinite wisdom would take, in order to accomplish so arduous a work, and to bring about so stupendous a design, if it had not been unfolded to us in the Scriptures of truth.

IV. The light of nature convinces men of the necessity they are under to *perform many social and relative duties*: but it never afforded a distinct or consistent scheme of practical religion.

It must be owned that a great many excellent things have been said in commendation of virtue by the pagans: some of them, as, in particular, the Stoics, professed themselves the greatest admirers of it, and have afforded us some sublime morality, especially the later Stoics, Seneca, Epictetus, Arrian, and the emperor Antoninus, who lived after Christianity had overspread the world; and who, it is more than probable, borrowed their best strokes from thence; yet these ascribed more than was fit to nature, or to the will of man, when they made virtue to lie in his power; and they attributed too much to virtue, when they affirmed it to be the sole good, and made happiness to lie entirely in it. More than this, they run into the most



profane rant; they made a virtuous man, on some accounts, superior to God himself. One of the best heads among them, Seneca, has told us, "That the wise man looks upon and condemns the enjoyments with which other men please themselves, with as calm a mind as the supreme God; but regards himself more than God on this account; God cannot make use of them, but the wise man will not." Nay, he has ventured to say: "There is one thing in which the wise man exceeds God, because God is wise by the kindness of nature, and not by his own attainment." Nothing can be more extravagant than such bold assertions; they are, indeed, worthy of a sect who showed that they could go as far in nonsense as in blasphemy; when, on other occasions, they affirmed that pain was no evil. It is a conceit unworthy of wise men, for any to say, as the Stoics did in effect, that a man is as happy when his joints are distorted by a rack, as when he is lying on a bed of down; or that he is possessed of as much temporal blessedness when he is tormented by the stone or gout, as when he enjoys bodily health, accompanied with ease of mind. This is senseless, unnatural stuff, and shows how poorly men judge of virtue and happiness, when they are left to the bare light of nature.

It might have been thought, if men would have consulted their own experience, and would have looked into their own hearts, that they might have been satisfied that virtue was out of their own power. It must be granted that some who studied mankind with exactness, had a right conception as to this, and showed they had a larger share of natural light than the modern advocates for reason. Socrates, in one of his disputations, had showed that virtue came not by nature, or by teaching, and was asked how it was then that men became good: he answered, in this remarkable manner: "I do not think this can easily be made evident; but I am apt to conjecture it is a divine gift, and that men become good, as men become prophets; these are not so by nature, or art, but by divine inspiration. Good men declare to those who are members of the same civil society with themselves, things which are to be, by divine inspiration, more clearly than such as deliver oracles. It seems to me that virtue is neither taught, nor comes by nature, but is a divine gift to such as possess it." The same conclusion was made, after a long dispute, by Plato, in Socrates's name, in the following words: "Virtue is neither by nature, nor by teaching; but it comes by divine distribution, to those who have it, without the help of human search and industry." These sagacious observers of human nature were convinced that goodness came neither by nature or by instruction, without a supernatural aid, but they had only some faint glimmerings of light as to this matter; they had no clear conceptions about it, and they only propose it as a matter of conjecture, or, at most, as a problem. There

is hardly to be found in the heathen writers any thing more noble, and more agreeable to truth than this notion; yet some of those who might have improved it, if natural light had been a good guide, took care to slight it. Hence we have this absurd rant in Cicero: "No one ever reckoned himself indebted to God for virtue, and justly; for we are on good grounds commended for virtue, and glory in it, which could not be, if it was a gift of God, and we had it not from ourselves. Who ever gave thanks to the gods on account of his being a good man?" It must be granted that it thwarts the pride of fallen men to acknowledge themselves indebted to God for a power to do good; therefore it is no wonder that the generality of them have no notion of this matter.

The temperance, moderation, and contempt of riches, of some heathens, are things for which they have been immoderately cried up by those who would call themselves Christians. It must be owned, many of the pagans showed a less selfish spirit, than some modern dignified infidels, who, like hungry wolves, greedily gape after the fattest benefices in a Christian church, the doctrine of which they deride. Not to take from any their due praise, it must yet be confessed, that such as were most eminent in some of the before-mentioned virtues, gave way to great vices. Thus as to Socrates and Plato; what the apostle Paul has said of the heathens in general, held true of them, Rom. i. 24, 25, "that God gave such up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is God blessed for ever." There have apologies been made for the persons mentioned, that they were not guilty of unnatural wickedness, but had a sort of sublime exalted affection for a beautiful body, which was the seat of a refined mind: but any one who has observed in what an odious luscious way they always spoke, when they were upon this head, must have less sense than charity, if he can bring himself to believe that nothing of worse than brutish lust was involved in what they talked of, in a rapturous manner, under the name of love. Plato, besides, in his imaginary commonwealth, allowed the community of wives, though he has expressed himself so ambiguously, that this has been questioned.

There was, on occasion, much of a public spirit, and a love to their country showed by many of the pagans; but this was allayed by an immoderate degree of pride, vain-glory, and obstinacy. The most admired patriots made themselves their end, in all which they did for their country's service; and their whole aim was to have the empty applause of being heroes after their death. Their sullenness of spirit appeared, in their so often murdering themselves; and the imperfection of their natural

light was showed in their committing the greatest of all sins, under the notion of practising exalted virtue. It is surprising, that so many foolish encomiums have been made, by such as should know better, on some heathens, for things which should render them the scorn of all wise men. Thus, for instance, how many times has Cato been set forth, as an instance of greatness of soul, in that he would not out-live the liberty of his country; when the truth is, he had too little a soul, and too envious a temper, to see Cæsar, a person against whom he had a rooted prejudice, have it in his power, as he had it in his nature, to forgive what he had done against him. Thus likewise Brutus has been cried up, as an instance of exalted virtue, only because he, like a vile assassin, murdered the man with whom he cultivated a seeming friendship, and who had loaded him with favours, and afterwards, meanly and ignominiously stabbed himself with the same dagger with which he murdered his friend, as soon as he found there was a likelihood that some others would make a greater figure in the world than himself. It is easy to call darkness light; but when the matter is coolly weighed, it will be found, that some who have been most cried up, among the heathen, acted the part of madmen and desperadoes, rather than of heroes and patriots.

It is the Scripture only which gives us a right notion of true morality and exalted virtue. It is from thence only that we are clearly and distinctly informed, that it is not sufficient for us to do what is materially good, unless we act out of a principle of love to that God to whom we are indebted for all the blessings we enjoy, unless we make his will our rule, and unless, in all our civil, moral, and religious actions, we aim at the advancement of his glory, "in whom we live, move, and have our being." It is in the lively oracles that we are taught, that we must not act from a selfish spirit, that we must not make our will and our humour the guide of our actions, and that we must not make vain-glory our end. It is from thence we learn, that we must repent of what we have done amiss, be filled with holy sorrow for our evil actions, watch our hearts, as well as our lives, and keep a guard upon our thoughts as well as upon our actions. It is only from the sacred volume that we are instructed to resign ourselves to the will of God, to practise self-denial, to mortify the lusts of the mind, as well as the lusts of the flesh, to be patient under afflictions, not through stoutness or sullenness, but out of expectation that all our troubles will turn to our good, and willingly to take up our cross, and follow Christ our Master, through much tribulation. These sublime virtues are not taught in nature's school, and were never practised by any who were left to bare natural light. We have sure instruction as to these heads given us in the Scripture, which is the word of the ever-living God; and by that we are

informed, that it is not in our power, who are fallen creatures, to render ourselves good and virtuous, but that we are enabled, by God, to will and to do according to his good pleasure, and are by his grace, assisted to choose what is for our profit, and to do what is well-pleasing in his sight. It is by supernatural light that we are enabled to conclude, that we are not our own, being called of God, and redeemed by Christ; that we should show forth the praises of him who calls us to honour, glory, and immortality, and of him who rescues us from wrath and condemnation, by his own blood; that when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, having done no more than our duty; and that we are indebted for the power to do what we really perform, to the aids of the blessed Spirit, who makes us meet to see and enjoy God, in the happy realms of rest which are above.

V. It is agreeable to the light of nature to allow the *immortality of the soul*, and a *future state of happiness and misery*; but such as have had no better light have ever been uncertain as to the after existence of their spirits, and took up with absurd notions about a future world.

Some of the refined heathen, nay, some who might have known better, if they had not, through a conceit of the sufficiency of their reason, scorned Christianity, have owned that the soul was mortal. Of this herd was the demure Stoic, the emperor Marcus Antoninus, whose senseless jargon is as follows: "If souls remain for ever, how has the air contained them from eternity? Souls, when they are translated into the air, after continuing there a while, are changed, poured out, and united with, and received into the spermatic principle of things, and so give room for other souls." Some had better apprehensions, as to the soul's noble nature, than this poor bigot; and as they looked on its immortality to be a thing probable, they have said some excellent things on this subject; but yet if their sentiments are nicely examined, it does not appear that they had got entirely above uncertainty, and it will not be found that they were willing to trust to their own arguments. Hence Socrates is made by Plato to conclude his defence of himself in this mean manner; "Now it is time for me to go hence, to meet my death, and for you to depart, with a prospect of enjoying life: which of us will have the advantage, is unknown to any one, except it is to God." Indeed, some have ventured to say that this expression showed the great humility of him who uttered it, but not his doubt about the happiness of a good man in a future state. But surely they imagine we must not use our senses; for since it is said, none knows whether it will be better with such as go out of the world, than with such as stay behind, it cannot be otherwise than that he who spoke this must be ignorant, which is more than being in doubt about the matter. If the several pagan

writers who speak about the soul's immortality, are carefully considered, it will appear, that as they use poor arguments to prove the probability of this point, so they speak doubtfully about it; and no wonder, since they were strangers to the gospel, by which "life and immortality are brought to light."

The conscience of all men is under an impression that they must give an account of themselves to God, and must be either happy or miserable in a future state, according as they are absolved or condemned by him. Many of the heathen were persuaded of the soul's immortality from thinking on its noble nature; but they did not care to be positive, neither were they willing entirely to trust to their own arguments. As the result of this imperfect assent to the soul's immortality, almost all nations have entertained a notion of a state of happiness and misery after death; but the ideas the heathen took up with of it were exceedingly low. Some thought that the soul passed, by way of transmigration, either into the body of another man, if virtuous, or to animate a beast, if otherwise; than which nothing can be more ridiculous. The best account that they gave of a state of misery was, that it was confinement in a dark prison, where guilty men were enclosed with rocks, bound in chains, and lashed by furies, with whips of serpents; and they represented the state of happiness as a place where just men enjoyed rest, in treading pleasant fields, and reposing themselves in fragrant bowers; and they made them to wear away their hours with innocent, though unprofitable amusements: but they had no conceptions of their being happy in the presence of God, or enjoying communion with him. We may from reason render extremely probable, if not demonstrate, the immortality of the soul; but the light of nature affords us very little help, as to the knowledge of a future state. It is the Scripture that informs us, that "the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment," where conscience will always torment them; and that the "righteous shall go into life eternal," where they will not be employed in low and mean services, but will be for ever taken up in the delightful work of praising their God, without any sin to disturb them, and without any grief to rack them. There they will enjoy ease and rest, but will not be inactive; there they will have the delightful society of angels and archangels; and there they will behold the face of their Redeemer in righteousness, and will have this assurance to add to the pleasure of their state, that their happiness will never cease, and their joys will never end.

#### APPLICATION.

When we who enjoy the light of revelation, reflect on the imperfect notions, which the most refined among the pagans had

of the most momentous points; such as the unity of God, the corruption of man, the way to be reconciled to an offended Creator, the nature of virtue and a future state, things in which all mankind are equally concerned, we should reckon it a great privilege that we are not left to the dim light of nature, but have a more sure guide afforded us than bare reason, in religious matters. When we look into the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans, we find that they have left us as complete models of history, as beautiful pieces of poetry, and as fine specimens of oratory, as any which have been composed by moderns, who yet enjoy the advantage of having them to copy after: nay, it may be said,\* that, as to works of genius, the writers of a later date have very seldom equalled, and never have exceeded the ancients, only in things composed in a sacred strain, they have vastly outdone them in true sublimity. The reason of remarking this is, that none may go away with a conceit, that the ancients had less sense and reason than the moderns. In things which depend merely on intellectual abilities, they showed themselves such great masters, that it is justly reputed the greatest perfection, in a piece written now, to come any ways up to them. However, these great masters of reason, these wonderful proficient in polite attainments, ran into the most childish absurdities when they meddled with the important matters of religion, which yet are of universal concern. As this shows how unfit reason, as it now is in men, is to be a guide in sacred matters, so we should take occasion, from hence, to be very thankful, that we enjoy the light of the gospel.

When a celestial herald was sent to proclaim to some shepherds, near Bethlehem, the birth of the Lord of life, he called the message which he was to deliver, glad tidings of great joy, when he thus spake to them, Luke ii. 10, 11; "Fear not, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." As the harmless Shepherds were tending their fleecy care they were frightened at the sudden sight of an angel coming in a glorious majestic form; but the messenger of peace took care to inform them, that he came not as an executioner of divine vengeance, that therefore they

\* I do not know any modern history that can compare with those written by Thucydides, Dionysius, Sallust, and Livy. As to the higher sort of poetry, we have some pieces in the didactic kind, written by Fracastorius, Vida, Angelus Bargeus, Palæarius, D. Heinsius, which exceed much any thing left of the ancients except Virgil's Georgics. In the epic kind, we have nothing comparable to Homer and Virgil, which is without a mixture of the Christian religion; by the help of this, Vida, in his *Christias*, Mr. Spencer, and Mr. Phineas Fletcher, in their allegorical writings, and, above all, Mr. Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, have exceeded all the Pagan writers in true sublimity. In the more raised parts of oratory, Demosthenes and Cicero have never been equalled by any moderns, except by the Christian preachers, whose plainness has something in it more grand than all their flourishes.

should not be discouraged, since he was to proclaim in their ears the best news that ever mortals heard; which glad tidings were, that a Saviour was actually born into the world. These tidings occasioned great joy in the inhabitants of heaven; Luke v. 13, 14, "for suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-will to men." The gospel was called glad tidings of great joy, eminently, as it made known the actual birth of the Saviour of the world to the shepherds; and, indeed, the divine revelation, in the gospel, of the whole method of man's salvation, makes it a message of joy and peace, to all who have a value for their own interest. It is from the Scriptures of truth that we are informed that the divine Persons consulted about our welfare, and laid the plan of our happiness before the heavens were stretched over the empty space, and the earth was hung upon nothing. God the Father chose to salvation a number of the posterity of man, and entered into a covenant with God the Son, as the Head of the elect, and with all the elect in him, as his seed. The oracles of truth declare to us, that, according to the covenant of grace, the Son of God appeared as the Saviour of man, who had destroyed himself, and, that he might accomplish the great work he had undertaken, assumed the human nature into union with his divine person, lived a life of ignominy and disgrace, and died a shameful and a painful death on the cross: they assure us, in the most positive manner, that he who was born a child, who appeared as a mean man, and who died as a malefactor, was no less than the mighty God, one invested with infinite power; who consequently was able to bear the divine wrath, to offer up to infinite justice a proper satisfaction, and to make way for mercy to be glorified, without any other divine perfection being injured. The gospel reveals the perfect righteousness of this great Saviour, as the righteousness which, being imputed to the guilty, can justify them before God, or give them a right to forgiveness of sins, to the favour of the supreme Potentate, whom they have provoked, and to everlasting happiness. It is in this that the Holy Spirit is promised, to quicken, renew, and sanctify those for whom Christ died; to enable them to follow holiness, or to practise virtue, out of love to God, and with an aim to advance his glory; to strengthen them, and support them, that they may grow in grace, and persevere in true godliness; to comfort them by working in them peace, joy, and hope; and to bring them, at last, to the land of uprightness; in fine, it is the Scripture which declares to us, that the departed spirits of such as trust in Christ, are conveyed into the presence of God, to partake of the most substantial joys, and that their bodies shall be raised in glory, when Christ, who is their life, and the God of their salvation, shall appear. These glorious

things we, who have the Scriptures, know from thence; and seeing, through the tender mercies of our God, this gospel light has visited us, we ought to abound in thankfulness, and should rightly improve the knowledge with which we are blessed. And as we should be sensible of our own mercies, so we should greatly pity such muddy souls as are enamoured with the darkness of paganism, and choose obscurity rather than light, because their pride is great, their apprehensions are confused, and their deeds are evil.

When we receive the Scripture account of the Father, the Son and the Spirit, concerning themselves in our salvation, we may with rapture cry out, O the depth of the love of these divine Persons, which, in the full extent of it, passes knowledge! But can we be enough affected with a sense of it? Alas! no; not as long as we sojourn in these curtains of distance. We cannot sing their praises in so exalted and so rapturous a strain as we ought; how do hosannahs languish on our tongues, and how does our devotion die? This will be our case, as long as we have our abode in a country of separation, and are strangers in a strange land. We cannot then but be wishing that the hour may come, and the day may hasten, when we shall put off the rags of our mortality, and be clothed with the white attire of innocence, and shall take up our abode in the amiable tabernacles which are spread on the mountains of spices. There, there, and no where else, in the company of angels and archangels, and of all who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, and have trod the path to glory before us, we shall strike the strings of the heavenly lyres, with skilful hands, and shall raise our voices to a due pitch, to sound forth, to all eternity, the high praises of the Father, who chose us to salvation; of the Son, who redeemed us from wrath; and of the Spirit, who made us meet for, and conducted us to the peaceful provinces of joy and rest.

To the three divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one living and true God, whom we adore, be supreme honour and glory, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.



THE  
DOCTRINE OF PARTICULAR ELECTION  
STATED AND DEFENDED,

IN TWO SERMONS,  
By MR. JOHN SLADEN,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON I.

2 THESSALONIANS ii. 13.—We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

As pride was the great sin, and proved the sad fall of our first parents, so it is the prevailing vice and damning evil of their posterity. They, in affecting to be as God, knowing good and evil, ruined themselves; and we, in following their pernicious example, bring swift destruction upon ourselves: "Vain man would be wise, though he is born as the wild ass's colt," a poor unthinking ignorant creature. We either aspire after the knowledge of what God has not revealed, and pretend to dive into the secrets of his counsel, or we reject and quarrel with what he has declared, because it sets us low, and advances the riches of divine grace and wisdom, and ascribes all glory to God, and will not allow us to boast of any thing of our own. From hence it is, that men speak evil of the things they know not, and swell into an opposition to those truths that they cannot fathom, and which tend to lower their exalted pride. What was said of the man of sin, in particular, is too justly applicable to all men by nature; "He opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," 2 Thess. ii. 4.

The grand controversy, between corrupt nature and the almighty God, is not whether any or all of the human race shall be saved; but who shall have the glory of salvation ascribed to him, God or the creature. The pride of man prompts him to say, the glory of salvation is due to me, for I save myself; but the great Jehovah justly challenges the glory of salvation to himself, and says, I will have all the glory thereof, for it is by my sovereign and efficacious grace that men are saved. Thus pride is the unhappy parent of unbelief, and a principal cause of the enmity there is in the carnal mind against God; yea, this

is at the bottom of all the rude opposition made to those doctrines of Scripture, which illustrate and advance the almighty power and free grace of God in the salvation of sinners.

Whence is it that the doctrines of special election, of efficacious grace in regeneration and conversion, of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and of the infallible perseverance of the saints, though so clearly revealed, and strongly proved in the word of God, are, notwithstanding, so generally denied, opposed, and ridiculed, but because they give all the glory of salvation to God, and will not allow man so much as to boast a little? This I apprehend to be the main reason of the furious assaults that, in all ages, have been made against these glorious truths; "but let God be true, and every man a liar." Rom. iii. 4. "To God belongeth mercy, but to us shame and confusion of face." Dan. ix. 7—9. "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? Or who has first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever, Amen." Rom. xi. 33—36.

The words of our text give us an account of the ground of the difference between the believing Thessalonians, and those reprobates that the apostle is speaking of, in the context; "They," says he, "shall be damned, but you shall be saved; they believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness; you have believed, and are sanctified; they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; you have been effectually called, through the gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." A wide and awful difference! But whence arises this discrimination? What is the cause and reason of it? How comes it about that these Thessalonians shall be saved, and the others shall not be saved? That these receive the truth in the love of it, and the others do not thus receive it? The apostle tells us, that it is the distinguishing grace of God in election; they had the gospel preached to them, as well as these Thessalonians, but they refused it, and chose darkness rather than this light; these received it with pleasure, and walked with comfort in the light of it; and the reason is, because God had, from the beginning, chosen them to salvation: "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."

Some, by the word *beginning* here, understand the beginning of the apostles' preaching the gospel to these Thessalonians, and would have the words to be read thus: Because God has, from

the beginning (of our preaching to you, showed that he had) chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, which gives the earnest of it, and makes us meet for it, and belief of the truth, which promises it. I am glad to find such a paraphrase as this upon the text, given by one who was a known opposer of our doctrine; for though his sense of the words, "From the beginning," is certainly wrong, as I may show hereafter; yet the exposition in general, is so far from being repugnant to the doctrine of particular election, that it abundantly confirms it.

Another commentator gives this as his sense of the text: "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because he has, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;" that is, says he, "because he has been so favourable to you above others, as to appoint the gospel to be preached to you, and you to be called to the faith of Christ so early, and to be taken out of that wicked generation by the preaching of the gospel, and that grace which is annexed to it, and by your receiving the truth." But this interpretation of the words is so very low and jejune in itself, and so contrary to the plain meaning of the text, that the common reader may easily discern the weakness and falseness of it. I shall therefore give what I apprehend to be a just paraphrase upon the words: "We are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God has, from the beginning, or, from eternity, chosen you to salvation, even eternal life, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as the necessary means, whereby you are to enjoy this salvation."

In the words we may observe these several parts:

1. The affectionate *compellation*: *Brethren, beloved of the Lord*. *Brethren*, a title denoting nearness of relation, and carrying in it strong affection. *Beloved*, not only of us apostles, but of the Lord. Blessed are they who are beloved of the Lord; therefore persons are drawn to God in time, because he loved them from everlasting. Jer. xxxi. 3. "We love him, because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19; he redeemed and pardons us, because he loved us. Rev. i. 5.

2. We have the apostle's acknowledgment of *praise* due to God on the account of these Thessalonians; *We are bound*, or we ought, *to give thanks always to God for you*. We do give thanks, and we look upon ourselves as obliged to do so. We give thanks to God on your behalf, and that not occasionally, or for a time only, but incessantly, *always*. This shows the high opinion the apostle had of the blessing bestowed on these persons, and was a testimony of the great respect he had for them.

3. We have the *ground* and *cause* of the apostle's acknowledgment of praise due to God for these Thessalonians; and

that is, their *election* of God: *because God hath chosen you to salvation*. This is an evidence that they were beloved of the Lord, and this is the foundation of praise to God for them.

Here we may observe, the *act*, chosen; *hath chosen*, or elected. It is such a choice as discriminates them from others, and it is a choice that will secure the end. The *agent*, God; *God hath chosen*. God who made you, God whom you had rejected and affronted, God who has power and authority to choose whom he pleases, he hath chosen: and the *object* or persons chosen, you Thessalonians, once unbelieving and unholy, but now faithful and sanctified. God has chosen you, who might justly have rejected you; he has chosen you, when he refused others: he chose you, before you chose him. This appears,

4. From the *antiquity* of the choice, *from the beginning*; not from the beginning of your effectual calling, nor of our preaching to you, nor of the gospel, nor of time, but from eternity: for though the phrase, *from the beginning*, seems to have respect to time, yet by it eternity is generally to be understood, in the sacred writings; as where God is called the *ancient of days*, to signify his eternity, Dan. vii. 9, and where wisdom, speaking in the person of Christ, says, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," Prov. viii. 23. And that this must be the sense of the words in our text, is evident, from that place where God is said to choose us in Christ, "before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 4.

5. We have the *end* of the choice, or the blessing that they were chosen to, even *salvation*. Not to external privileges, not to the enjoyment of the gospel, not to the means of salvation only, but to salvation itself; complete and final salvation, even to eternal life. This was what God had chosen them to; and this was to be the consequence of their faith and sanctification. That this must be the meaning of salvation here, is indisputable; not only from the following words in the text, which tell us, that they were chosen to salvation, "through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth," but also from the subsequent verse; "Whereunto he called you, by our gospel, to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;" i. e. to which sanctification and faith he called you, by the preaching of our gospel to you, that you might by these obtain the glory of Christ, which is your salvation. Here is salvation mentioned, not only distinct from sanctification and faith, but from the gospel, the means of salvation; and therefore by it must be meant eternal salvation, consisting in our obtaining the glory of Christ, or *beholding his glory*, John xvii. 24.

6. We have the *means* in the use of which they were to enjoy the salvation, to which they were chosen; and these are

sanctification and faith. "He has chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." God did not choose them to salvation, without holiness and faith; he did not, by one decree, choose them to salvation, and, by an after-act, determine the means; he did not choose them to salvation, because they were holy and faithful; he did not choose them to a possible or probable salvation, that is, provided they performed the conditions of salvation, and did believe they were holy, which he left entirely to their own choice; but he chose them, by one determinate decree, to a certain salvation, which they should infallibly obtain, through faith and sanctification: and these two, even sanctification and faith, the apostle here joins together, to let us see that they are inseparable; and to assure us, that they shall both be found in all those whom God will save.

From the words thus divided and explained, we may observe,

(1.) *That there is a certain number of fallen Adam's race, whom God has chosen to salvation.* The Thessalonians in the text were, as elect, plainly distinguished from those of whom the apostle had been speaking, in the foregoing context; not as chosen to the external means of salvation, for, in this sense, the others were chosen as well as they, but as chosen to eternal life. Election cannot properly be universal; the very nature of the act supposes a refusal of some. There being some elect, certainly infers some non-elect: *There is a remnant*, says the apostle, *according to the election of grace*; and a remnant can never be all.

(2.) *When God chooses persons to an end, he also determines the means to that end.* The same decree that designs any persons to salvation, ascertains the means for the obtaining of that salvation: and these are declared to be faith and holiness; for "he who believes not, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him," John iii. 36; "and without holiness, no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. "God has chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." God has chosen you to salvation, and therefore he has sanctified your spirits, or rather has given you his Spirit, to sanctify you, and make you to believe the truth of his gospel. Faith and holiness are not the causes of election, but are the necessary means by which the elect enjoy that salvation, to which God chooses them, and may properly be said to be a part of the salvation decreed, if there is any justice in the distinction of salvation into initial and final.

If faith and holiness were the causes of election, then it would not be of grace, according to the apostle Paul's way of reasoning; "If by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no

more grace, otherwise work is no more work;" but the election is of grace, Rom. xi. 5, 6. If faith and holiness were the causes of election, God could not be said to choose us that we might be holy; for holiness cannot in the same respect be both cause and end: we cannot be chosen to it and for it both, but God chose men that they might be holy, Eph. i. 4. If faith and holiness were the causes of election, then God could not be said to choose us first, but we rather to choose him first; whereas our Saviour tells his disciples, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit," John xv. 16. If faith and holiness were the causes of election, then there would be no room for that objection of the non-elect; "Why does he yet find fault? for who has resisted his will?" Rom. ix. 19. Nor would the answer the apostle gives to the objection be pertinent; "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he hath before prepared to glory; even us whom he has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," Rom. ix. 20—24. "So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy," chap. ix. 16.

(3.) *Election is an eternal purpose of God to save.* The Socinians and Remonstrants assert it to be only a temporal act, and so confound election with effectual calling; whereas the Scriptures speak of them as distinct things, asserting our vocation to be a temporary act, and our election to be an eternal purpose of God. Thus, when our Saviour says, "Many are called, but few are chosen;" Matt. xx. 16; and when the apostle Paul says, "Whom he predestinated, them he also called," and speaks of persons as "called according to the purpose of God;" here is a plain distinction between being called, and being chosen and predestinated. So when the apostle, in the text and context, talks of being "chosen in the beginning to salvation, and of being called by the gospel;" and in another place, of God's "purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9, he plainly declares to us, that, though our vocation is temporary, our election is an eternal act of God. This is demonstrable from the pre-ordination of Christ to be a sacrifice; "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for believers;" 1 Pet. i. 20; and who was "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev.

xiii. 8. I might add to these that text, where Christ's people are said to "inherit a kingdom prepared for them, from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 54. All which Scriptures do abundantly prove to us, that election is an eternal purpose of God to save, and so to be distinguished from our actual salvation, both in whole and in part.

(4.) *To be chosen of God to salvation, is matter of great thankfulness.* This is a greater blessing than to be chosen as Israel of old was to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; or as David, to be chosen a king; or as Jeremiah, to be a prophet; or as John, to be a forerunner of Christ; or as Paul, to be an apostle of Christ. It is a greater blessing than to be chosen universal monarch of the world: this is the very fountain and foundation of all blessedness.

Before I enter upon what I particularly design, from these words of the text, I would beg leave to lay down a few premises, which may serve to direct us in judging of and censuring the doctrine of election. As,

1. The doctrine of an election is so fully and clearly revealed in the word of God, that Christians of all persuasions profess to believe it, though they differ widely in their sentiments about the nature and extent of it; wherefore the doctrine ought not to be condemned in the gross, and it betrays great weakness and egregious folly to take offence at the very word.

2. There is no doctrine, though never so plainly laid down in the sacred Scriptures, but what subtle and selfish men have formed some objections against.

3. We ought not to deny, or to be staggered in our minds about a doctrine we have received, because of some objections raised against it, which, it may be, we cannot, at present, answer; for, if so, there is no doctrine but what we should be tempted to deny, at one time or another.

4. In order to a settled belief of any controverted doctrine of faith, we ought carefully to weigh and consider the several arguments and objections for and against it, and to be determined on that side of the question where the chief strength lies.

5. In our inquiries after revealed truths, we should have an immediate dependence on the Divine Spirit, to enlighten our minds, and to lead us into knowledge of saving doctrines; otherwise we can never be sincere inquirers after truth.

6. Persons should not censure a doctrine as damnable, unless they are to prove that it is false, and then the belief of it is hazardous to salvation. This I particularly mention, because many persons have been very lavish in throwing the black epithets of unmerciful, destructive, and damnable, upon this doctrine of special determinate election.

Having laid down these rules, by way of premise, I proceed now to the main thing I intend, from the words of our text, and

that is, according to the province assigned me in this lecture, to open and vindicate the great and important doctrine of *special election*. And the method which I propose, through divine assistance, to pursue in this affair, will be this:

- I. I shall state the case in hand, and explain what I take to be meant by this doctrine.
- II. I shall produce positive proof to confirm it.
- III. I shall consider the arguments and objections brought against it. And,
- IV. I shall make some application.

It cannot be expected that I should discuss this doctrine in all its parts and properties, in the narrow compass to which I am confined: I shall therefore chiefly apply myself to what I take to be the main controversy of the present day, as to the article of election; and that is, whether there is such a thing as a personal absolute election to salvation, in contradistinction to a general national election to church privileges, or to the means of salvation, and to a conditional indeterminate election to salvation.

I. I am to explain the doctrine. And here I would give the various senses of the word *election*, especially in the book of God: and then lay down the different opinions of persons about the doctrine.

1st. As to the different acceptations of the word. Sometimes it has respect to *excellency*; and thus it is referred both to persons and things: to *persons*, such as have any uncommon or peculiar excellence, are said to be chosen, or choice persons; and that whether it refers to superior stature, and external appearance, as in the case of Saul, who was called "a choice young man, because, from his shoulders and upwards, he was higher than any of the people," 1 Sam. ix. 2, or to any excellency of art, as the seven hundred left-handed men are called chosen men, "because every one could sling stones to an hair's breadth, and not miss," Judges xx. 16; or to uncommon courage and might, as where it is said, 2 Chron. xiii. 3, "Abijah set the battle in array, with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him, with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour." Thus the word is applied to persons. We find it also applied to *things* that are excellent: Thus we read of *chosen chariots*, Exod. xiv. 7, and of *choice sheep*, Neh. v. 18. Whatever is excellent, is said to be elect or chosen, in the style of the Hebrews, because when persons choose, they generally pick out the best, and most valuable from among the rest.—Sometimes the word *election* signifies a choosing to a particular *office* and *employ*, whether civil or sacred: Thus Saul is said to be *chosen* to be a king, 1 Sam. x. 24; and Judas is said to be *chosen* to the apostleship, John vi. 70. Sometimes



it signifies a choosing to external *privileges*, and this not of private and single persons, but of whole bodies and communities. Thus the people of Israel are said to be an *elect and chosen people*, in many places of the Old Testament, because God had distinguished them from all other nations, by conferring peculiar blessings upon them.—Sometimes it may refer to those who, under the gospel, have been *proselyted* to the Christian faith, and enjoy the means of salvation; whence the converted Jews are said to be a *chosen generation*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. But more usually by this term is meant an election to eternal life and salvation. And here sometimes we find the word taken objectively, for the persons chosen, *the election hath obtained*, Rom. xi. 7, i. e., the elect, or persons elected.—Sometimes it is taken formally, for the act of God in choosing, which is called *the election of grace*, Rom. xi. 5, and *the purpose of God according to election*, chap. ix. 11.

2dly. I proceed now to state the different opinions of persons, as to the doctrine of election.

(1.) Some by election understand no more than a general *national* election, an election to the external means of salvation; as the Jews were said to be an elect people, because they had the statutes and ordinances of God; and ours may be called an elect nation, as being favoured with the enjoyment of the gospel, while other nations have not the means of grace. But, though we allow that there is an election, thus general and external, yet this cannot be all that is meant by election, because we often meet with a *particular and personal* election, and an *election to salvation*, in the sacred Scriptures.

(2.) Some, by election, suppose no more to be intended, than a *conditional decree*, or purpose of God, to save all that believe in Christ, repent of their sins, and yield sincere obedience to him. But we ought to distinguish between a promise and a purpose, a declaration and a determination. God does, indeed, by his revealed will, declare, that all who believe and repent, shall be saved; but we are no where told that he has decreed to save men upon these precarious conditions. God cannot properly be said to decree men to salvation, provided they believe and repent, or to decree to save those who believe and repent. Because,

Faith and repentance are not the conditions of God's decreeing salvation to any, but the qualifications of the persons, whom God has absolutely decreed to save. God has not decreed to save men upon the conditions of faith and repentance, but he has determined to give faith and repentance to all whom he has decreed to save; and accordingly he has declared these to be necessary qualifications in all saved ones.

If God decreed men to salvation upon these conditions, election would not be of *grace*; for if any work performed, or to

be performed by us, is the cause of God's choosing us, God cannot be said to choose us freely; nor can it be an act of grace, according to the apostle Paul's way of arguing, Rom. xi. 5, 6, which we observed before.

Election, according to the Scripture notion of it, is effectual to salvation. God will give faith and eternal life to all his chosen; wherefore it cannot be a mere conditional decree, to save those that believe and repent, without securing the faith and repentance of any: but more of this hereafter.

If God was to decree salvation to men upon the uncertain conditions of faith and repentance, the will of God must, in a most important affair, depend on the will of man; nor could God absolutely determine the salvation of any one soul, till he was to see how the will of man would turn; nay, not till his perseverance to the end, and that will not be till death.

According to this notion, no one may be saved; for if God has only determined to save those who believe and repent, and not decided to give faith and repentance to any, it may so happen, that not one person shall eventually be saved, notwithstanding this decree of God; for, if it is left to every man's free will, to believe and repent, whatever boasts we may make of its power, we have from hence no positive assurance that any one shall believe and repent.

(3.) Some, by election, understand no more than a *temporary separation, calling, and conversion*; but this is the *effect* of election, and not election itself. We are called *according to God's purpose; and whom he predestinated them he also called*. Rom. viii. 28. 30. Now predestination and the purpose of God must be very different from calling, which proceeds from it, unless the cause and the effect are the same thing. Election is frequently spoken of as an act of God, in eternity; and therefore it cannot be a mere temporary act: the evidence of our election is in time, the decree itself is from eternity.

(4.) Some, by election, understand the *eternal purpose of God*, to save certain and particular persons. Now, under this general notion of it, we shall find the sentiments of men to be very different. Some tell us, that it is *for* faith and good works foreseen; but if we are chosen *to* faith and good works, we cannot be chosen *for* them. God does not foresee that men will believe and be holy, and from hence choose them to salvation; but he foresees that men will believe and be holy, because he has chosen them to salvation, through faith and holiness. God cannot be said to foresee that any will believe and be holy, to whom he has not determined to give these saving principles; and he has determined to give them only to those whom he has chosen to salvation. Some assert, that God, in electing certain persons to salvation, had no regard to the fall; that election respects men only as creatures of his making, and not

as creatures that had fallen from him; but though the sovereignty of God may herein seem to have a wonderful display, yet I cannot think that his other divine perfections are glorified by this opinion. Some allow of a particular election, but deny any such thing as a non-election or preterition; they grant, that a certain number shall infallibly be saved, but, at the same time, affirm, that all may be saved if they will. This is an opinion that is absurd in its very nature, as well as it is evidently contrary to the word of God. Some tell us, that they believe both an election and a reprobation: but further suppose, that there is a middle sort of persons, who are neither elect nor reprobate, and who may yet be saved: but this is a notion of which we have no footsteps in the word of God, and which is altogether indefensible.

Thus have I given you the various sentiments of persons about the doctrine of election; if I may be permitted now to give my sense of it, it is this: It is the eternal and immutable purpose and design of God to save a determinate number of fallen Adam's children, by Jesus Christ. It is not a national election, or an election to church privileges only; it is not a determination to save those who believe, and which leaves it uncertain whether any will believe; it is not a temporary call of men to salvation; but, as I have observed, an everlasting and invariable purpose and design of God, to save certain particular persons of Adam's fallen race. God foresaw in his eternal foreknowledge, the whole posterity of Adam lost and undone, and he determines, in his sovereign good will, to raise to his mercy a trophy of honour, by erecting to himself a glorious church, out of the rubbish of this apostasy; and that his purpose according to election might stand, without any injury offered to his other perfections, he entered into a covenant with Christ, as the second Adam, and Head of this chosen people, according to which covenant Jesus Christ was to fulfil the law, suffer, and die, in the room and stead of his chosen people, and thereby purchase for them, and secure to them faith, sanctification, and eternal life; so that all the elect of God shall infallibly be saved. When God chose a people to salvation, he laid his scheme in such infinite wisdom, that not one of his chosen people should miss of the end.

II. I am now to prove, that there is *such an election*, or that God has immutably designed the salvation of a certain number of fallen Adam's children. This is a doctrine that is too generally denied and exploded, in the present day. Persons make a jest of particular personal election; and, in the room of it, set up a general national one: but whatever insults and contempt are thrown upon this truth, I hope, by divine assistance, to make it appear, that it is an article founded on the sacred Scriptures, and a doctrine according to godliness.

1st. We may argue the truth of the doctrine from the *divine perfections*. Whatever doctrines are deduced from Scripture, and are agreeable to the divine perfections, must be true; and that this is so, I will endeavour to prove, by the following method of reasoning.

(1.) It must be granted that there is one ever-living and true God, who is possessed of all *possible* perfection. To deny that there is a God, is to break in upon the first principle of reason; to suppose an imperfect God, is a contradiction to common sense, and contrary to all the ideas we have of Deity, both from natural and revealed religion. If there is a God, he must be a Being of absolute perfection.

(2.) It must be allowed, that whatever perfection or excellency is to be found in any creature, the same must be *essential* to the Most High God, and that in the most eminent and transcendent degree. If every creature derives its being from God, as its first cause, then no creature can possibly be possessed of any excellency, but what must, in the highest and most absolute sense, belong to God. Since, therefore, God made all things, he must be before and above all things; before them in existence, and above them in perfection. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" Psal. xciv. 9, 10.

(3.) No one can deny that it is an excellency in any creature to be *wise* and *powerful*; wise to lay a scheme of what he intends to do, and powerful to perform and accomplish what he designs. For a rational being to set about a work, without first forming a model in his mind of what he intends to pursue, is to discover a defect of wisdom; and not to be able to accomplish the plan he has laid down, betrays a want of power.

These premises being granted, which cannot, I apprehend, be reasonably denied, it must follow from hence, that whatever the great God does, as the effect of power, he designed to do it: and whatever he designed to do, he does. These are propositions self-evident, which ought not to be disputed; for to suppose God to perform any work which he did not first design to perform, is to charge him with a degree of folly, and with acting below an intelligent agent; to suppose him to design to do a thing, which he does not effect, is to tax him with impotence. If it is an instance of the wisdom and power of man, first to design a work, and then to perfect it, the great God, who is infinite in both these perfections, must design what he effects, and effect what he has designed.

Either God actually saves all men, or he does not; if he does, he must have designed it; if he does not, it is plain he never designed it. To assert that God designed to save all men, and yet that, in fact, he only saves some, is, in effect, to affirm, either

that he changes his purpose as to a great many, or that he wants power to execute his intentions towards them; the very supposition of either of which is false and blasphemous: for reason must tell us, that it is impossible, for an infinitely wise God, to change his mind, or to alter his purpose; and that it is equally impossible that a Being of almighty power should not be able to bring his purposes to effect. To this decision of reason, the sacred Scriptures bear their testimony, in the plainest and strongest assertions; when it is said, that "God is not man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: has he said, and shall he not do it; or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Numb. xxiii. 19. God may seem to repent, or to do those things in his providence, which would argue repentance in man; but whatever contrariety there may be in his providence, there can be no alteration in his purposes; therefore Job, under the different dispensations of God towards him, readily acknowledged this of him: "He is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desires, even that he does; for he performs the thing that is appointed for me." Job xxiii. 13, 14. With how much majesty does the great Jehovah deliver himself in these words: "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. xli. 9, 10. To this the church bears witness, when she says, "Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased." Psal. cxv. 3. So Solomon tells us that there "are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord that shall stand." Prov. xix. 21. God works without control or resistance; "he does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say to him, What doest thou?" Dan. iv. 35. "In whom also (says the apostle, speaking of himself, and the believing Ephesians) we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. Thus our doctrine stands firm upon the infinite wisdom and almighty power of God. All that God designed to save, he saves; but he actually saves some only, therefore he designed to save only some of fallen Adam's children; for, if we consider God as infinite in wisdom, and of almighty power, there cannot be a more rational way of arguing than from his acts to his designs.

I might further argue the doctrine from the *foreknowledge* of God. God foreknows from eternity whatsoever shall come to pass in time, and particularly he foreknows all that will be saved. Now, either all men will be saved, or not; if they will not in fact all be saved, then God does not foreknow that all

will be saved, but he only foreknows the salvation of those who shall eventually be saved; and therefore he foreknows their salvation, because he designed to save them. If God did, from eternity, foreknow that only some of the fallen race of Adam would be saved, then he, from eternity, designed to save some of them only: but God, did from eternity, foreknow that some only would be saved, because, in fact, all will not be saved.

Nor can this be any impeachment of the justice or mercy of God, because he had been just had he determined to destroy all Adam's sinful offspring; and it is the effect of infinite mercy if he saves any of them. Should it be said that God designed the salvation of all men upon certain conditions; to this it may be replied, either God did design that these conditions should be performed by all, or he did not; if he did, then all would be saved; and that all will be saved, those who oppose our doctrine do not pretend to affirm; if he did not, then it must carry in it a high reflection on the wisdom of God, to suppose him to design an end, upon precarious conditions, or to decree the salvation of all men, upon the performance of conditions, which he must foreknow many of them would not perform, because it is evident in fact, that many do not perform them.

To conclude this head of argument: If it cannot be proved that all men will actually be saved, it is weak in us, and it supposes a manifest defect in God, to affirm that he designed the salvation of all men upon certain conditions; and especially it is the more so, because, notwithstanding this universal conditional decree, it is uncertain whether any one will be saved; for by the same reason that we cannot affirm the actual salvation of all men, from this decree, we cannot ascertain the certain salvation of one man. That decree which make the salvation of all men only possible, does not assure the salvation of one man, but renders the salvation of each individual person a bare possibility.

2dly. I come now to examine what proof we have of this doctrine in the *word of God*.

I shall not attempt to produce any arguments which might be collected from the sacred writings, by comparing several Scriptures together, but shall vindicate those particular texts which I apprehend to confirm the doctrine under consideration; and these, for the sake of variety and method, I shall digest into this order. I shall, first, produce those that prove a personal election, in contradistinction from a national one; then I shall offer such as assert an election to salvation, in opposition to those who affirm that election refers only to the means of salvation, or to church privileges; and afterwards I shall mention those that assure the certain salvation of a chosen people, to refute the notion of an universal conditional election.

(1.) I would produce some of those scriptures that prove a *personal* election, in contradistinction to a national one. That the election mentioned in the Holy Scriptures has a frequent respect to general bodies, or communities, I will readily allow; but to affirm that it is only of such, is a bold and groundless assertion. It is very evident, that our Saviour speaks of a particular, and not general; a personal, and not national election; when he says, "Many are called, but few are chosen," Mat. xxii. 14. This, say some, is only a proverbial speech; but if it was, the proverb must carry some meaning in it. These words, says one, refer to the Jews, of whom, though many were called by Christ and his apostles to faith in him, yet few of them did or would accept of him as their Saviour, or embrace the faith of Christ. But though these words have a prime reference to the Jews, yet it will not follow that the doctrine contained in them is not of more large and general extent, and may refer to those who, in all after ages, are under the gospel call. Admitting that by the chosen is meant those who believe, which, however, is against the grammatical sense of the words, it is a strong proof of their election, their faith being the evidence thereof. Faith is of the elect of God, and therefore few believe, because few are elected, according to that of our Saviour: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep," John x. 26. The sense of the place I take to be this: Many are called, but few are chosen, *i. e.* many are called, externally by the gospel, to outward privileges, but few are externally chosen to salvation, or appear to be chosen to salvation, because few believe in Christ: but, let the meaning of the place be what it will, it is very evident that the few who are said to be chosen, must be understood of particular persons, and not of nations or societies.

When it is said, "For the elect's sake these days shall be shortened, and, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect; and he shall send his angels, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," Mat. xxiv. 22, 24, 31; these passages speak of particular persons, and not of nations; as the redeemed are said to be out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. v. 9. When it is said, "If it be possible, they shall deceive the elect;" by the elect some would have to be understood the persevering Christians: but this is a very absurd interpretation of the word, because, in the nature of things, these cannot be deceived; whereas our Saviour founds the impossibility of their being deceived upon the immutable decree of God, securing them as his elect from being deceived by false christs and false prophets. If it is said by the elect here are meant the faithful or believers, this will not at all enervate the argument; for men are believers because they are elected, and not elected

because they are believers; and because they are elected, therefore they shall not be finally deceived.

When the apostle says, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 29, this place cannot be understood of nations, but of particular persons. So in that famous controverted chapter, Rom. ix., though we allow that the election of the Jews, as a nation, is to be considered as a part of the election there spoken of, yet it is beyond all doubt that a personal election is also intended. This is evident, not only from the instances of Jacob and Esau, but of Pharaoh, and the many declarations, objections, and answers, thrown about in that same chapter.

The "remnant according to the election of grace," of which the apostle speaks, Rom. xi. 5, must be meant of particular persons, and informs us of an election out of an election; "All are not Israel that are of Israel," says the apostle, chap. ix. 6. All Israel were a chosen people, as a body and nation; but the apostle speaks of a remnant chosen out of this elect body, and this must refer to individuals. This is further confirmed from the former part of the chapter: "Hath God (says the apostle) cast away his people? God forbid;" as if he should say, He has not done so, far be it from him to do so; "for I also am an Israelite," and if he had cast off all Israel, he had cast me off; "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew;" Rom. xi. 1, though God has rejected the Jews, as an elect body, yet he has not cast away his people, those whom he foreknew, and chose to be his peculiar people among this body. God had always a chosen people among Israel, a people whom he designed to save with an everlasting salvation, Isa. xlv. 17, and them he never rejected. In Elias's time, he had a chosen number among Israel; and, says the apostle, "even at this present time there is a remnant, according to the election of grace," Rom. xi. 4, 5.

When the apostle says, "I endure all things for the elect's sake," 2 Tim. ii. 10, it must be understood of particular persons, and not of general bodies; because it is added, "that they also, together with him, may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory," viz. the salvation which is to be had in Christ, or which is laid up in Christ, their Head, for them, to eternal glory; to the eternal glory of God, who had chosen them to this salvation, and laid it up in Christ for them; or to their eternal glory, when they obtain this salvation. A learned author tells us, that for the elect's sake, is no more than for the sake of Christians, who are a chosen generation; but if, by Christians, he means no more than nominal ones, the context refutes this interpretation. If, by Christians, he intends real believers, such as shall obtain salvation, these are properly the elect of God; who therefore shall believe and obtain salvation, because they are elect.



Thus have I mentioned several places of Scripture wherein a personal election is to be understood, in contradistinction to a national one, or an election of communities. I might further produce those texts which speak of an election to the *internal means* of salvation, such as faith, sanctification, and holiness; which, as they prove that election is not for faith and good works foreseen, do also demonstrate a particular election; as, for instance, where it is said, that those who love God are "called according to his purpose," Rom. viii. 28, even that purpose which he purposed in himself before all ages; and when it is said, "Whom he foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son;" not merely in a way of suffering, but of sanctity and holiness, as both the preceding and following context plainly proves; so God is said to choose us, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be "holy and without blame before him in love:" Eph. i. 4. The apostle in another place, says, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them," chap. ii. 10. Paul calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the *faith of God's elect*; where, by faith, we are not to understand the doctrine of faith, which all who enjoy the gospel have, but that faith which is peculiar to the elect; so we read of persons who are *elect to obedience*. Now, in all these places, election must be understood as special; for faith and holiness are not of nations, but of particular persons properly.

Before I leave this head, it will not be amiss for me to observe, that the Scriptures not only speak frequently of a particular personal election, in contradistinction to a general election of nations or communities; but they often speak of an election of *persons*, as determinate and certain, in opposition to an indeterminate and uncertain number: as when our Saviour bids his disciples rejoice, because their "names are written in heaven," Luke x. 20; not as the disciples chosen to an office, but as Christians chosen to salvation. So Christ is said to "call his sheep by name," John x. 3, and "to know his sheep," verse 14; and he says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," verse 16; and in another place, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," John xvii. 24. We read also of "the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written, or enrolled, in heaven," Heb. xii. 23; and, in many places of the Revelation, we are told of persons whose names are, and are not "written in the Lamb's book of life," to show that the number of the elect and reprobate is determinate. Thus much may serve to prove a personal election.

(2.) I shall now produce some of those scriptures which assert

an *election to salvation*, in opposition to those who tell us that election refers only to the external means of salvation.

I do not remember that when salvation is mentioned in Scripture, unless it has some other words accompanying it, which determine its meaning to be so, it does ever denote only the external means of salvation; except it be in two passages, where "salvation is said to be of the Jews," John iv. 22; and, by the fall of the Jews, "salvation is said to come to the Gentiles," Rom. xi. 11. However, that there is an election to salvation, distinct from an election to outward means and privileges, may be argued,

[1.] From those forecited places which speak of election to faith, and sanctification, and good works, and obedience, and a conformity to the image of Christ; for if salvation, even eternal life, is in the Scripture declaration, annexed to, and connected with faith and holiness, then when persons are said to be chosen to these, it must be presumed that these are chosen to salvation by these.

[2.] This may also be proved from those scriptures which make mention of a kingdom, and a glory "prepared, for certain persons, from the foundation of the world." As where our Saviour answers the mother of Zebedee's children, who requested of him, that he would grant that her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom; saying, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but (it shall be given) to them for whom it is prepared of my Father," Mat. xxv. 23. "It is not mine to give;" that is, to every one, but to those only, or except to those for whom it is prepared of my Father; namely, by an eternal appointment and predestination: thus the kingdom is said to be "prepared from the foundation of the world," Mat. xxv. 34. If therefore there is a kingdom and glory prepared for some persons, from the foundation of the world, God must be supposed to choose or design some persons, from the foundation of the world, to possess and enjoy this kingdom and glory; and this is, no doubt, what John intends, when he says, that those who are with God are *chosen*, Rev. xvii. 14.

[3.] No man can fairly deny that an election to salvation is intended by our Saviour, when he says to his disciples, "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen." In another place he says, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you hath a devil!" In one place Christ says, he had chosen them twelve; in another he plainly shows, that he had not chosen them all, but asserts, I know whom I have chosen. No one will have the front to affirm, that our Saviour in these declarations contradicts himself, and therefore there must be a sense in which both the propositions are true; therefore the usual distinction I take to be just, when Christ says, he had

chosen them twelve, it must refer to external privileges, to discipleship; and when he says, of the same twelve, I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen, his choosing here must refer to salvation, even to eternal life. Judas was chosen to the honour of discipleship, but he was not chosen to salvation, because he betrayed his Lord, and went to his place without repentance. If we were to suppose our Saviour to paraphrase on his own words, he would give the sense of them in language to this purpose: "Though one of you, my disciples, is a devil, a traitor, and shall fall away to destruction, yet I have chosen the rest of you to eternal life, which you shall infallibly obtain."

[4.] This may be further argued, from what the apostle says to the Thessalonians, about their election; "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God," 1 Thess. i. 4. In which words, by their election, nothing less can be intended, than an election to salvation, as is apparent both from the foregoing and following context: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father," 1 Thess. i. 3. "For our gospel came not to you in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; and ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost; so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia," ver. 5, 6, 7. Now, when the apostle brings in these evidences, as the foundation of his knowing their election of God, he cannot hereby intend their election to the enjoyment of the gospel only, for this he knew without these evidences; he must therefore mean their election to eternal life, which he knew by their faith, love, patience, holiness, and by the power of the gospel upon their hearts; for "our gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power." Had it come in word only, it would have been a sufficient proof of their election to the enjoyment of it; but when it is said to come with power, this is an evidence of a further election, even to salvation.

[5.] We might also argue an election of particular persons to salvation, from that exhortation of Peter to the believing strangers: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." 2 Pet. i. 10. Here, by calling and election, the apostle cannot mean their calling and election to the gospel, for of this they were sure before; nor would their assurance of this prevent their fall, nor procure that an "entrance should be ministered to them abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," which he tells them their making their calling and election sure would do. It may be said, if, by election, be

meant the eternal purpose of God to save them, why does he exhort them to make their election sure, when it was sure already? for the "purpose of God according to election shall stand." To this it may be replied: It was sure, indeed, in the immutable decree of God, but it might not be sure to them; they might not have an assurance in their own souls of their election; and therefore the apostle, in order to their establishment and comfort, advises them to make their calling and election sure to themselves, or to make their election certain by their vocation.

[6.] We have scriptures which positively assert an election to salvation. Besides our text, which holds forth this truth, in direct terms, we read of the vessels of mercy, which God had *before prepared to glory*, Rom. ix. 23, *before prepared*, even in his eternal purpose: for if they had prepared themselves, by their faith, for glory, they would improperly be called vessels of mercy; nor would this preparing of themselves be at all agreeable to the meaning of the text, which expressly says, that God had before prepared them to glory. Again, we are said to be predestinated to an inheritance; in whom we have obtained an inheritance, or a right to an inheritance, "being predestinated thereto, according to the purpose of him, who works all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11. Now, what is the inheritance that the apostle says they were predestinated to? No other than the inheritance among the saints in light; the "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away, which is reserved in heaven for them," 1 Peter i. 4, the inheritance of the children of God, and of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest. Now, this inheritance, to which they were predestinated, they are said to obtain, because they were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." Eph. i. 13, 14. Again, the apostle tells the Thessalonians, that God had not "appointed them to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. v. 9, which appointment is no other than God's election of them to obtain salvation, according to the explication of it in our text, where it is said of these same Thessalonians, that God had, "from the beginning, chosen them to salvation." Besides these several texts, we read of many that were *ordained to eternal life*. Acts xiii. 48. This, I know, is a text very much controverted; but, as I have not room to enter into the litigations upon it, I will take it for granted that the translation is just, and refer those who desire further satisfaction to compare the criticisms and explications of others.

Thus have I laid before you those scriptures which prove a particular election to salvation, in refutation of their opinion, who tell us, that election is only of nations and societies, and

not of particular persons, and only to the enjoyment of the gospel, church privileges, and the external means of salvation, and not to salvation itself.

To sum up this argument. Whereas it is suggested, that it is not easy to imagine how the apostle Paul should know who were elected to salvation in any church, without a special revelation; nay, that he did not know this, because he speaks of some who would fall away, and cautions all against it; to this I would beg leave to reply, by observing, that it is very evident that the apostle did speak of particular persons, as elect to salvation, which certainly he would not have done, had he not known them to be such; that we are not able to prove that he did not certainly know whom God had chosen to salvation; that he had a spirit of discerning, and why might he not know the elect from this spirit? that God did give him a special revelation, as to this matter, is not easy to disprove; that he had many peculiar marks given him of their election, from whence he knew it; that though he sometimes wrote to the churches, as professing societies of Christians, yet, at other times, we find him addressing himself to them as persons elected to salvation; that he might write to the churches in general, as elect, though some few of them, by falling away, should appear to be otherwise. Though we were to allow that some, in the churches, to whom the apostle wrote, did fall away, yet it will be hard to prove that they were of the number that he styled elect to salvation; seeing, after his time, many might be added to the churches, who might prove reprobates. But, however, the cautions and exhortations that the apostle gave to the churches, are no way inconsistent with his knowing them to be elect to salvation; for though, as elect, they could not miss of salvation, yet they were to obtain it in the use of means, such as cautions and directions, which made these highly necessary; nay, had the apostle known any particular church to be non-elect, he would never have cautioned and advised it at all.

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## SERMON II.

2 THESSALONIANS ii. 13.—We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

IN order to treat of the doctrine of *particular election*, from this text, I proposed to explain it, and I gave the various senses of the word *election*, especially in the book of God; and laid down the different opinions of persons concerning it. My second head was to prove, that God has immutably designed the sal-

vation of a *certain number* of Adam's children. The truth of this doctrine I argued from the divine perfections, and then came to examine what proof we have of this doctrine from the word of God: I produced such texts as prove a *personal* election, in contradistinction to a *national* one; and then offered such as assert an election to *salvation*, in opposition to those who affirm, that election refers only to the *means* of salvation, or to church privileges. There is another thing I propose under this head, and to that I shall proceed:

(3.) I am now to prove the *certain salvation* of a chosen people; or that all those whom God elected to salvation shall be saved; and to refute the notion of a conditional mutable election.

God did not determine to save *all* men, upon uncertain conditions, nor has he altered his purpose as to *any* that he determined to save; but all those whom he elected, with a design to save them, shall believe, be holy, and obtain eternal life. We may as well suppose, that any of God's elect should be without the necessary means of salvation, as imagine that any of them should miss of it at last. If any of God's chosen should fall short of eternal life, there would be no difference between them and the reprobate; especially if, as some affirm, the reprobate may be saved, as well as the elect fall away; but this is to confound both reason and Scripture. The elect shall be saved; this I might prove, from the *wisdom* and *power* of God; for if God has designed to save any persons, then they must be saved; otherwise God must repent, and change his mind concerning them, or be overpowered by some superior agency of theirs; to suppose either of which, is not only to degrade, but to deny the divine perfections. This might be proved from the *decrees* in general. If the decrees of God, in general, are absolute and immutable, then this of election must be so; but the former proposition we have before confirmed, and the latter is an undeniable conclusion from it. If election is an absolute purpose of God to save any, independent of any conditions to be performed by them, which may render this purpose effectual to their salvation, then it must be unchangeable; and if it is an unchangeable purpose of God to save, then all those whom he thus purposed to save, must necessarily and infallibly be saved: nothing can hinder, prevent, or disannul their salvation. This may also be argued from the *intercession* and *declaration* of Christ; who thus said, while on earth, "Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me," John xvii. 24. "I give my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," chap. x. 28. Now, both these places refer not only to Christ's disciples, that then were, in particular, but to all the elect of God, to all who shall afterwards believe through their word. This may

also be proved from what our Saviour said of the elect, that it is *impossible they should be deceived*, Mat. xxiv. 24, *i. e.* so far deceived and carried away, by false Christs, as to miscarry of salvation. This might also be strongly argued, from that passage of the apostle, where, having spoken of the wicked apostasy of some, he said, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. This truth stands with unshaken firmness on that text, where God, who cannot lie, is said to promise eternal life to his elect, before the world began, Tit. i. 1, 2. Those places also would yield no small proof in the case, where it is said, that Christ's *people shall be willing, in the day of his power*; and that *all that the Father gave to him, shall come to him*: for that by Christ's *people*, and those who were *given to him*, the elect, and not actual believers, must be intended, is plain, because they are called Christ's people, and are said to be given to him, before they are willing, and before they come to him; but they shall be willing, and they shall come to him. If to what has been offered, were added all those texts of Scripture where mention is made of the names of the elect being *written in heaven*, and in the *book of life*; they would help abundantly to confirm the truth under consideration, viz. that all the elect shall be saved. But I pass these by, though they might have been more largely insisted on, to good advantage; and I proceed to take notice of those texts, where both the *means* and *end* are expressly attached to, and connected with the decree.

(1.) I would mention some scriptures where the *means* are connected with the decree. Here I would only offer three; each of which assures us, that there is an indissoluble conjunction between the means of salvation, and election to salvation by those means. While Paul was preaching at Antioch, some contradicted and blasphemed; others received his word with gladness. Now the reason of this, as assigned by the historian, is the election of God; "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed," Acts xiii. 48, whereby we are told, that all those who then believed, were ordained of God to eternal life; and therefore they believed, because they were so ordained. Some, indeed, for the word *ordained*, would have *disposed* to be set down; but I see no reason to vary from our translation, because the original word generally conveys to us the same idea that we have by the word *ordained*, viz. some purpose of another concerning us, and not any inward disposition of our own: or if we translate it *disposed*, it will not follow that it was a disposition of their own; but they were disposed, *i. e.* by the decree and providence of God, or set apart for eternal life, and so God gave them faith, as the necessary means of their salvation. I cannot take the word to intend any internal disposition

of our own, because, whatever inclination men may have to happiness, abstractly considered, I cannot see how persons, who are represented in Scripture as "enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7, and as saying to the Almighty, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," Job. xxi. 15, can be supposed of themselves to have any inward inclination to eternal life, as it consists in the enjoyment of God, and can no otherwise be obtained, than by faith and holiness. Besides, if this was the sense of the word, then either their faith, which followed this their disposition, was of their own effecting, or of the operation of God; if it was of their own effecting, then in vain do the Scriptures tell us, that "faith is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8, and the "fruit of the Spirit," Gal. v. 22: if it was of the operation of God, that is, if it was given of God to them to believe, then this was either the consequence of his ordination, or the result of their disposition; if the former, this militates against the sense of the word, as before given from some; if the latter, then the operations of God must depend on our previous dispositions, and God would be obliged to give faith to all who find in themselves a disposition to eternal life, and so he would be despoiled of the freeness of his gifts. In fine, I do not apprehend how the word can denote a present disposition, because, if so, it might equally be said of all that heard the apostle, as well as of those that believed, for all men are disposed to happiness; and then the original word should have been in the *present*, whereas it is in the *preterperfect* tense, and signifies something done before, and not a present disposition.

Another scripture to our purpose is this: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ: according as he has chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him, in love," Eph. i. 3, 4. God chose them that they might be holy; and, that his purpose might not be frustrated, he blessed them with all spiritual blessings, even those blessings which were necessary to make them holy, and without blame before him in love. A little after, the apostle, speaking of himself, and the believing Ephesians, says, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them." Eph. ii. 10. From these words it is evident that their new creation or regeneration was the result of a divine decree; they were created to good works, because God had before ordained them to walk in them. Thus we see how the means of salvation are connected with and confined to election.

[2.] I would now take notice of those scriptures that speak of the elect's obtaining both the *end* and the *means*. And the first I would mention is that where the apostle gives us the



golden and indissoluble chain of grace: "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Let us take these words which way we will, read them backwards or forwards, they tell us that election and salvation, both initial and final, are undivided and inseparably united together. Should we ask, Who are they that are predestinated? The text tells us, those, and only those, who are effectually called, justified, and glorified. Should it be further asked, Who are they that are glorified? The answer must be, Those who are justified and called. And who are those? Those whom God did predestinate. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate.* Add to this what the apostle says of Israel: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded," Rom. xi. 7. What was it that Israel sought after? Nothing less than righteousness and life, justification and salvation. Now, though Israel, as a body or nation, did not obtain this which he sought after, yet the election, or the elected among Israel, did. I would only further mention that of the apostle: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling;" and this, "not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. If this text stands in need of any explication, you have it in these words: "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," Tit. iii. 4—7.

Thus have I endeavoured, in the plainest, fullest, and briefest way I could, to vindicate and maintain the immutable purpose of God to save a determinate number of fallen Adam's posterity. The arguments from the divine perfections will appear, I hope, to be founded on the highest reason; and the scriptures, ranged in their order, are, I think, pertinent and strong; each one defensible in its reference to the particular topic it is brought under: and, all taken together, contain an invincible argument to prove the doctrine of absolute particular election. I have endeavoured to avoid, as much as I could, the repeating of the same text over again; but, according to the different turn of the argument it was sometimes unavoidable.

I could produce many authorities to confirm this doctrine, but I choose to have it rest on Scripture, and not on human testimonies; though it were to be wished that many of those who have *ex animo*, and in open court, subscribed to the seventeenth

Article\* of the Church of England, did pay a more decent and becoming regard to the doctrine evidently contained in it, and not deny, misrepresent, ridicule, and revile it, as they do.

III. I am now to consider the *arguments* and *objections* brought against the doctrine of particular election, as it has been stated and proved.

Having, as I hope, so abundantly confirmed the truth of the doctrine, there is less need for me to take up much room in answering the objections brought against it. When a truth is once well established, the objections brought against it are the less to be regarded; but where the positive proof is weak, objections become strong arguments. Therefore, though what has already been offered may be thought sufficient to drive all cavils before it; yet, to prevent any staggerings in our minds, and to establish our faith more firmly in this great article, it cannot be amiss for me to lay down, and to canvass particularly, some of the objections that are brought by our opponents against it. And here I might take notice of those objections that are brought against our doctrine, which are founded upon the universality of Christ's death, the nature and sufficiency of free-will to salvation, and the supposed defectibility of the saints. But as the opinions from which such objections are drawn, are themselves false and unsound, which it is the province of some of my brethren to prove, I shall not attempt to interfere with those who are to come after me, but shall leave the objections to fall to the ground, as they necessarily will, when the doctrines of particular redemption, of efficacious and invincible grace, and of the infallible perseverance of the saints are established in their order. I might also take notice of the objection made against our doctrine, that it has a tendency to drive persons into despair; but as the same objection will come with equal force against the doctrine taught by our opponents, I shall not spend time particularly to refute it; but whether an opinion that does not secure the salvation of one single person, nay, which makes the salvation of each man barely possible, as depending on the feeble and fickle will of man; has not a greater tendency to drive persons into despair, than a doctrine that ascertains the salvation of millions, upon the immutable decree of God, the impartial reasoner will easily determine.

\* Of Predestination and Election, which runs thus:—"Predestination to life is the eternal purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel secret to us, to deliver, from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, to bring them, by Christ, to everlasting salvation. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season, they, through grace, obey the calling, they be justified freely, they be made sons of God by adoption, they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, they walk religiously in good works, and, at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity."

The main objections that are brought against our doctrine, and which I shall apply myself to answer, are such as are formed from the general love and good-will of God to mankind; from the general commands, exhortations, wishes, and exhortations of God with men; from its making ordinances useless; and the pretences, that it weakens men's regard to good works, and encourages licentiousness; that it has a natural tendency to prevent endeavours after salvation; and that it is contrary to the justice and mercy of God.

1. It is objected to the doctrine of absolute and particular election, that it militates against the *general love and good-will of God to mankind*, so frequently expressed in the sacred Scriptures; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. ii. 4. Now, how can it, will some say, consist with these general declarations of the love and good-will of God to men, to assert that he has chosen only some of this world, and these all to salvation? To this objection, I would thus reply. If, in fact, God has chosen some only of mankind to salvation, as has been proved, it is weak and vain to object that this is contrary to his general declarations of love and good-will to men; for we are sure, as the Scriptures are uniform, that there must be a harmony and consistency between the doctrine and these declarations, though we, it may be, are not able fully to discern it. It is beyond all contradiction, that the terms *world* and *all*, are frequently, in Scripture, taken in a limited sense, and cannot admit of an universal meaning; and, whenever they are connected with salvation, they are always, I think, taken in a restrained sense. The term *world*, in the forecited place, cannot be taken in an universal sense, because God did not so love the angels; nor did he so love every individual man and woman, as to give his only begotten Son for them: if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for all mankind, how comes it about that he does not freely bestow salvation on all mankind? for the apostle Paul says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things," whereby he plainly declared, that God will certainly bestow all saving blessings on those for whom he gave his Son. So when God says, "he will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," the term *all* cannot be taken in an universal latitude, because all men are not actually saved; and many do not come to that knowledge of the truth whereby they may be saved, being destitute of the gospel, the means of salvation. If God will have men to be saved, how comes it about that all are not saved, since God does whatever

he will? To say that God wills all men universally to come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved, when he does not send the means of knowledge and salvation to millions, is to suppose that God wills an impossibility: "I am," says Christ, "the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." John xiv. 6. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12, besides Jesus Christ. If the terms *world* and *all*, are to be taken in an universal meaning, then God would be said to love all the world, so as to give his Son for them, and, at the same time, not so to love them, as to give them salvation by him, which to me appears absurd; nay, according to this, God would love and will the salvation of unbelievers, as well as of believers, which would be to love and hate the same persons, and to will both their damnation and salvation at the same time.

When therefore it is said, that *God so loved the world*, &c. by the term *world* we must either understand the human race, in opposition to the fallen angels, whom God did not so love as to give his Son for them, or the Gentile world, in contradistinction from the Jews; in which sense, the evangelist John frequently makes use of the term, both in his gospel and epistles; or by it we may understand the world of the elect who shall believe in him, and be saved by him. And thus the phrase, *Whosoever believes in him*, may be considered as exegetical of the means whereby those whom God loved, and for whom he gave his Son, shall have everlasting life, even by faith in Christ. When it is said, *God will have all men to be saved*, we must either understand the term *will*, not of his decreeing, but approving will, signifying how agreeable the conversion and salvation of sinners is to him and that he is well pleased with all that are saved; or if we understand it of the effective will and purpose of God, by *all men*, we must either mean men of all nations, people, and languages, who are said to be "redeemed to God by Christ's blood," Rev. v. 9, or men of all relations, ranks, and conditions, which is the plain meaning that the context leads to; or otherwise we are necessarily driven into this scandalous absurdity, that God is disappointed of his will, as to the salvation of a great many: for nothing is more certain than this, that all men, in fact, are not saved.

2. I come now to consider the objection against particular election, which is taken from the general *commands, exhortations, wishes*, and *expostulations* of God. It may be said, if God has designed to save some only, and has determined not to give his grace to many, whereby they may believe, repent, and be obedient, how comes it about that he should, in his word, command all men to believe, repent, and be obedient to

his laws, with promises of life to them who conform, and threatenings of death to those who continue disobedient; that he should exhort all men to repent and turn to him, to come to him, to believe, and to be converted; that he should wish as he does, "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always! O that my people had hearkened to me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" that he should expostulate as he does; "Why will ye die, O house of Israel? O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not: Ye will not come to me that ye may have life," 1 John iii. 23. We have the same language in almost innumerable other places of Scripture. Now, to what end, may it be said, are all these commands, exhortations, wishes, expostulations? Is not this for God to delude his creatures? Is it not inconsistent with the divine sincerity, for God to make these general and solemn declarations, and, at the same time, to determine, from eternity, that many of those to whom these declarations are made, shall not believe, repent, be obedient, and be saved?

To this objection, which I have endeavoured to set in the clearest and the strongest light, that the objectors themselves can desire, I would reply in general: That these, and such like passages of Scripture, do not at all tell us what God designs to do for us, and with us, but only inform us what is our duty, what God requires of his reasonable creatures, what is agreeable to his revealed will; that faith, repentance, and obedience, are things which he approves of, and is delighted with; that salvation is consequent upon, and connected with faith and holiness, and that the effect and consequence of unbelief, impenitence, and disobedience, will be everlasting destruction. But to be more particular.

(1.) As to the general *commands* and *exhortations*, I would reply: That many of the commands of Scripture refer only to external acts of reformation, which reasonable creatures may perform, even though God denies them that grace, which is necessary to salvation. Men's being non-elect, does not prevent their acting as men, and performing many external duties, which God requires; besides, many commands are directed to those to whom God had already given his grace; and, in many places of Scripture, the promises and threatenings refer only to temporal rewards and punishments; but we will allow that God does command all men to believe, repent, and be obedient to him. It must also, on the other hand, be granted, that no man has power in himself savingly to believe, repent, and

obey; for if these things are of our own operation, they could not be called the gifts of God, nor would God be said to work in us *to will and to do of his own good pleasure*, nor should we have the several promises in the Scriptures, that God will renew and convert us; nor need we pray to God for his grace, that we may believe and be converted; nor are we obliged to render thanks to God, that we believe and are obedient; nor have we any just reason to ascribe the glory of our faith and repentance to God. No one will presume to assert that all men believe, repent, and are obedient, notwithstanding the general commands and exhortations of God, backed with the promises of life, and threatenings of death. If therefore God does design that all those to whom his commands and exhortations are made known, should comply with them, how comes it about that so many, in fact, do not do it? Should it be said, this is owing to the perverse will of man; to this we would reply, that the perverseness of will is the same in the elect, as in the reprobate; and if the perverseness of man's will could hinder the purpose of God from taking effect, then none of God's elect might believe and be saved; but all the elect shall believe, repent, be holy, and be saved, as we have before proved. But further, this is to suppose that God has made a creature that he cannot manage and govern, and that his determinations and designs are to be subjected to the will of man; so that if man will, they shall be accomplished; but if man opposes them, almighty power itself cannot bring them to effect. Wherefore, upon the whole, it is very plain and evident, that the general commands and exhortations to believe and repent, do not oppose the doctrine of particular election, or the purpose of God to give faith, &c. to some only; nor can we from them form an argument, or draw a just conclusion, that God does design that all men universally should believe and repent, because, in fact, all do not. But though God does not determine to give saving grace to all those to whom his commands and exhortations are made known, yet they are not, as some may suggest, vain and useless, which will appear from the following considerations.

God's commands do not tell us what God will do for us, but they inform us what we ought to do for him. As they are not the measure of our power, so neither are they the rule of God's decrees; for if so, God's commands would not be a directory to us, to show us what we ought to do; but they would rather be a law to God himself, telling him what he must do: he could not be said to command us, but rather to command himself. God is not obliged to bestow his saving grace on any, or to restore to any man the power of obeying his precepts, which he once had, but lost; herein he acts according to his own sovereign will, and communicates his saving grace to whom he

pleases; and these are only his elect, or those to whom from eternity he designed to give it. God, in giving his grace, and making his elect obedient to his calls and commands, does generally make use of the promises and threatenings of his word, as suited to work upon their hopes and fears. Though God determines to make only some obedient to his commands, and to leave others in their natural enmity and rebellion; yet it is highly proper and convenient, that even the wicked should know their duty, that their mouths may be stopped, and that they may have no reason to complain that God did not inform them what it was he required of them. When God commands *all men to believe and repent*, &c., it is in order to convince men of their weakness and inability, to excite his chosen people to pray to him for his grace and Spirit, and to lead them to Christ, who alone can give them faith and repentance, and thoroughly furnish them for every good work. No man can prove, and therefore no man ought to assert, that he is a non-elect person, and shall not be saved; or that God has determined not to give him grace to be obedient to his commands; to prevent therefore any such rash and despairing assertions, the command is promiscuous to believe; and we are told, *he that believes shall be saved*. God, in commanding men, does not consider them under the distinctive characters of elect or reprobate; he does not declare what his secret will towards them is, but considers them as his reasonable creatures, bound in duty to be obedient to him. Though God has, in his eternal decrees, made a manifest difference between some and others; yet in his commands he has made no distinction.

Thus much may serve in answer to the objection against our doctrine, taken from the general commands and exhortations of God to believe, repent, and be obedient, with the promises and threatenings annexed thereunto.

(2.) I come now to consider the objection drawn from the *wishes and expostulations* of God, as before laid down. To which I would reply, that many of those things which God expostulates with men about, are what they had in their power to do, or avoid; as when he refers to external acts of reformation, and to temporary judgments. God's expostulations are generally with his own people, and do not refer to all men universally. God cannot, properly speaking, be said to wish any thing, because this would argue great weakness and imperfection in him. To suppose God to wish any thing to be done, which it was in his own power to effect, is to charge him with egregious folly. When God therefore, speaking after the manner of men, is said, any where in his word, to wish that men would convert themselves, turn to him, and be obedient, we must consider such modes of speaking as only pathetic speeches, designed to convince God's elect of the evil of their ways, and to

press on them the observance of their duty to him. It is to show them their wickedness and ingratitude, the justice and equity of God's expectations and demands, and to excite them, by the most moving expressions, to repentance and reformation. God makes use of expostulations and wishes, as well as exhortations and commands, as the means whereby he will convey his saving grace to the hearts of all his chosen ones. If by the wishes of God we are to understand his purposes and designs, that all men believe and repent, and be obedient, whence is it, that he who hath the hearts of all men in his hands, "and turns them as the rivers of water, whithersoever he will," Prov. xxi. 1, does not actually make all men obedient, and that there are such vast numbers who are unbelieving and impenitent?

If it is said, that it is for God to delude men, and to act inconsistently with sincerity, to exhort and command all men to repent, and to expostulate, as he does with them, about their impenitence and disobedience, when he has from eternity determined to deny his grace to a great many, without which they cannot believe, repent, or yield obedience to him; to this I would reply, that it is very evident that these things are fact, viz. that God does thus command, and has thus determined.

It must be owned to be a very difficult thing to reconcile general declarations, and particular determinations to one another. It is vile for poor short-sighted creatures, because they cannot account for all God's words and works, to charge him with a want of sincerity, and with a design to mock and delude his creatures: but if there is any thing in the suggestion it will be as strong an objection against the foreknowledge of God, as against his decrees. Our opponents allow that God foresees the final impenitence, and obstinate disobedience of millions; and yet, at the same time, he enjoins that the gospel and the means of salvation be published to them, as if they were all to be saved. Now, why does God exhort and expostulate with those who were foreknown to be refusers and despisers of them? According to their way of charging others, is this to act sincerely? Is it not rather feigning and dissembling? So that this objection, if it has any weight in it, carries the matter further than the objectors will care to allow, and recoils, with a strong force, upon their own assertions.

3. It is objected against our doctrine, that it makes *ordinances vain and useless*; for if God has absolutely, from eternity, determined the salvation of a particular number of mankind only, to what purpose are ordinances instituted? The elect may be saved without them, and the reprobate cannot be saved by them. To this I reply,

(1.) Ordinances are not *essential* to salvation: if they were, then all who attend them would be saved; and such as had not



the opportunity of so doing, would infallibly be lost: but no one will assert that a bare attendance on ordinances will insure salvation; and we dare not affirm that all who have not the opportunity of attending ordinances will be damned. Faith in Jesus Christ is essential to salvation, because the Scriptures tell us, that "he who believes shall be saved; but he who believes not, shall be damned." Mark xvi. 16. But the Scriptures have no where, as I remember, asserted, that he who attends ordinances shall be saved, but he who does not attend them shall be condemned. Ordinances are the *usual means* of salvation, but not *essential* to it. God has obliged us, in a way of duty, to attend them; and has, for our encouragement, promised to own them for good to his people: but he has not obliged himself by them, or confined the communications of his grace to them. This is evident from various instances of conversion, where ordinances have not been made use of.

(2.) Because the gospel is preached to *all men* where its sound has reached, it will not from hence follow that all may or will be converted by it. In the apostle's time some believed it, and some gainsaid and blasphemed. Just so it is in our day; many are called, but few appear to be chosen, because few believe: the gospel is proclaimed to all, not that all, but that some may be saved.

(3.) The gospel is preached to all, because some of *all ranks* and *characters* are to be brought home to Christ by it; and because ministers are to hope well, and to show their charity to all. All that we preach to may be elect, for any thing we know to the contrary; however, in every congregation, where the faithful word is preached, there are some who belong to the election of grace: and though the same overtures are made to all who hear the gospel, yet none will believe and be saved, but the elect, whom God makes willing in the day of his power.

(4.) The preaching of the gospel is promiscuous to all, because ministers cannot distinguish between the *elect* and *reprobate*: God does not see fit to tell preachers what number he has chosen to salvation, of those they minister to, and what number he has refused: nor has he set any particular mark upon the persons of the one denomination or the other: wherefore they are commanded and obliged to declare the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, to all who come under their ministrations.

(5.) Ordinances, properly speaking, were primarily and chiefly designed for the *elect* only, as the usual and ordinary means, whereby the purpose of God, in their salvation, shall be accomplished. God could save his elect without the use of ordinances; but he has been pleased to appoint them, as the common means of conveying his saving grace into their hearts, in order to their enjoying that everlasting life, to which he from eternity designed them. Therefore he directed his apostles to go

and preach in some places, and not in others, because he had a *chosen people* in those places, to which he sent them, Luke i. 17, Acts xv. 14, and xviii. 9, 10, and the Lord, by their ministry, "added to the church such as should be saved," or such as he had determined to save, Acts ii. 47.

(6.) If God, by the general dispensation of the means of grace, designed to save all that come under them, how comes it to pass that all who attend them are *not saved*? God can as easily save all, as some, if he has designed; for *who has resisted his will*? If it is given to persons, under ordinances, to believe, God can as easily give faith to all as to some: if faith is of our own operation, then the purpose of God is limited to, and determined by the will of man.

(7.) In administering ordinances, especially in the preaching of the gospel, ministers are not to regard persons as elect or reprobate, but as *sinners* or *saints*. It is true, did they not hope, that among the unconverted there might be a chosen people, who should be called in due time, they would have no encouragement to preach to sinners, but would separate the saints, and preach only to them. In our ministry, we cannot be said to preach to persons under the unknown character of elect or reprobate: no; we preach the gospel to all without distinction; we tell sinners of their lost and miserable state, by reason of sin; set Christ before them, as the only Saviour of sinners; exhort them to fly to him for help; to repent of their sins, and to yield obedience to the divine precepts, not knowing who will believe, or gainsay, or what the success of our labour will be. And, while we are thus preaching to all, God lays hold of the heart of one and another, calls them by his efficacious grace, makes them penitent and obedient; and "as many as are ordained to eternal life believe."

(8.) Though the *reprobate* cannot be saved by the preaching of the gospel, unless we suppose that God reverses his decrees towards them; yet it is necessary that it should be preached to them, and on several accounts, viz. that they may know their duty, what it is God requires of them; that they may, under the ministry of the word, be restrained from some gross enormous vices; have their manners somewhat cultivated, and so be made useful to society, less injurious to the pious, and prevent a severer punishment. In fine, it is necessary that the gospel should be preached even to the reprobate, that their mouths may be stopped, and they may be left without excuse; "If I had not come," says Christ of the Jews, "and spoken to them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak (or excuse) for their sin." John xv. 22. The primary design of God, in sending his gospel and ordinances to any people, is, that the elect thereby may be brought home to himself, and his purpose in their salvation be accomplished; that the reprobate

are hereby left without excuse, is a secondary and more remote consideration.

Thus we see that the promiscuous preaching of the gospel to all, does not infer that all will or may be saved; but that it is the usual means whereby the chosen people of God are converted, edified, and comforted; and necessary to the reprobate, even though they cannot be saved by it. But if the general preaching of the gospel is supposed, after all, to carry any argument in it against the doctrine of special election, it stands with equal force as an argument against the divine foreknowledge.

4. I come now to consider the objection against our doctrine, "that it weakens men's regard to *good works*, and tends to encourage *licentiousness*;" to which I would beg leave to reply. Though some, who pretend to believe the doctrine of determinate election, are unmindful of their duty, and immoral in their conversation, it will not, from hence, follow, that the doctrine itself gives countenance to any such misconduct. If God had, indeed, chosen men to salvation, without regard to good works as a part of it, there would be some ground for the objection; but when good works are a very constituent part of that salvation to which God has designed the elect, and when they are the principal ground and evidence from whence persons can or may conclude that they are elected; seeing no man has any right to believe that he is elected of God to salvation till he is brought to hate sin, and delightfully to perform good works; when these things are so, I cannot conceive how this doctrine can be an enemy to good works, or why persons should deem it so. Those persons who are so bold and foolish as to say, if we are elected we shall be saved, though we live as we list, do not only reason quite contrary to the design of the decree, but give very plain and strong proof that they have no lot nor portion in this matter. No doctrine in the world has a greater tendency to discourage sin, and promote good works, than this of particular election; for if our election to salvation is of the free grace, goodness and love of God, what can be a greater argument to repentance than such goodness? What can incite us more to obedience than such love? What can more effectually teach us to live soberly, righteously, and godly, than such grace? Besides, when good works are, even by the purpose of God, affixed, as the very means whereby the elect are to attain their final salvation, and so are made necessary to, and inseparable from it, what can be a more powerful motive to the performance of them than this consideration? Further, the purpose of God, concerning the salvation or destruction of any, cannot annul the relation that we stand in to God, as his creatures, nor our obligation to perform good works. That I am a creature of God, and ought, as such, to be obedient to him, I know; but I cannot, it may be, know

whether I am elect, or reprobate; wherefore what is to me a secret, should never be a bar or discouragement to the performance of those things which I am bound to do, upon the most manifest evidence. Besides, though good works are not the cause of God's choosing any to salvation, yet they are absolutely necessary and useful, and that not only as an evidence of our election, but to testify our love to God; to promote the glory of God in the world, to convince gainsayers, to be an example to others, and that we may be more fitted for communion with God here, and the enjoyment of him in glory hereafter. In fine, that our doctrine is no encourager of sin, or enemy to holiness and good works, is evident, through grace, in some good measure, by the lives and conversations of those who profess to believe it. It must be granted, as a melancholy truth, that there are too many orthodox heads, who have sad unsound hearts, and lead very wicked lives; but if practical religion shines forth with greater lustre among any party of Christians more than among others, it is, generally speaking, I say generally speaking, most conspicuous among the avowers of the Calvinistic doctrines. I do not say this to fix a charge of wickedness upon others, far be it from me to be guilty of so much malice and uncharitableness; nor do I affirm this out of a vain ostentation, for who is it that makes men to differ? But when a doctrine is charged, as encouraging licentiousness, if the professors of it appear to be no more wicked than others, nay, to practise and maintain good works as much, if not more than those who would fix such an unjust consequence upon their doctrine, the objection is so far from weakening, that it has a tendency to establish and confirm our faith in the doctrine, as according to godliness.

5. It is objected, to the doctrine of particular election, "that it has a *tendency* to prevent endeavours after salvation, and to encourage indolence and presumption." If God has, from eternity, chosen a determinate number of persons to salvation, and if these, and no others, shall infallibly obtain it, then does not such a doctrine discourage endeavours, and lead on to sloth and presumption? For if I am not elected, may a person say, to what purpose are all my endeavours for salvation? I can never attain to it by them; and, if I am elected, why should I strive and labour, when my salvation is made sure, by the immutable decree of God? To this I would reply: That the abuse of a doctrine, by some weak or wicked persons, can never prove a doctrine to be false; there is no truth but what is liable to be abused. It is absurd and irrational, in its own nature, for any persons to argue at this rate, because this is to draw certain conclusions from uncertain premises. Though God has chosen some, and refused others, yet he has not told us who are the particular persons. The certainty of the end, upon the decree

of God, is no hinderance or discouragement to the use of suitable means, in order to attain the end, because God has, by his decree, connected the means and the end together; and we are said to be "chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Our Saviour knew very well what was the prefixed term of his life on earth; yet he studiously avoided dangers, and escaped the hands of the Jews more than once. God had revealed it to Paul, that none of the passengers, who were in the ship with him, should be lost; yet he exhorted the seamen to be active, and would suffer none of them to go out of the ship, when they attempted to have saved themselves in the boat.

The apostle Peter exhorts believers to "give diligence to make their calling and election sure," 1 Pet. i. 10, though he knew their election and salvation was sure, by the decree of God: and our Saviour bids all his followers "to strive to enter in at the strait gate," at the same time that he tells them, "many shall strive to enter in, and shall not be able," Luke xiii. 24. Moreover, the apostle Paul informs us, that "they who run in a race run all, but one only receives the prize," 1 Cor. ix. 24. No one can win who does not run; all will not win who do run; yet all run. We see then, from hence, that the certainty of the salvation of some, ought to be no hinderance to the endeavours of all to attain it.

Suppose I could assure you of this assembly, that God had determined the certain salvation of one in three, or five, or more or less of you; would not this be a greater encouragement to you all to be found in the use of means, than to be told that God had decreed the possible salvation of you all, but has not secured the salvation of any one of you? For who will strive so much after that, the attainment whereof is merely possible to every one, as for that which is certain to some, who strive for it? Nay, who will use endeavours at all, that considers his inequality to the work, and that it is next to an impossibility that he should obtain what he is to take pains for? But, on the contrary, if the salvation but of a few is certain, this will be an encouragement to all who seek after it, because each one will be ready to argue, who knows but I may be one of those happy ones, whose salvation God has infallibly determined? Those who oppose our doctrine, are free to allow that all men eventually will not be saved; now, whether their doctrine does not as much discourage endeavours as ours, is no difficult thing to determine; for what more encouragement is given to all to strive, from this declaration, that all will not eventually be saved, than from this, that God does not design the salvation of all men? Our doctrine cannot encourage indolence and presumption, because the means are connected with the end by the purpose of God; because no man has a right to conclude

himself an elect person, till he is called and converted, and because presumption, in an allowed course of sin, is absolutely inconsistent with a state of grace, and a strong argument that a person is not an elect of God, whatever his pretences may be.

6. It is objected to our doctrine, "that it is contrary to the *justice* of God, that it narrows his *goodness*, and limits his *mercy*; in short, that it is unjust, unkind, and unmerciful in God, to decree the certain salvation of some few, and to leave the rest to perish everlastingly."—"How is it," say our opponents, "consistent with the notions that we have of God, as a just, gracious and merciful being, that he should, from eternity, determine to give his grace to some few, whereby they shall infallibly be saved; and to deny it to a great many, from whence they must inevitably perish, when all mankind are equally the objects of his justice, goodness and mercy?"

To this we might answer, as the apostle does: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Rom. ix. 20. "Shall not the judge of the whole world do right?" Gen. xviii. 25. God says, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid: For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion; so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," Rom. ix. 13—16. "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid," Rom. iii. 5, 6. It is an easy thing to charge a scripture truth with being inconsistent with the perfections of God; but it is impossible to prove the allegation. It is a wicked thing to charge God with being unjust, unkind, or unmerciful, for doing what he will with his own; nor can the objection be made good against our doctrine, that it argues injustice, unkindness, and unmercifulness in God: the Scriptures give no encouragement for any such charges. It is represented as no derogation to the grace of God, that he called Abraham alone, leaving great numbers to perish; that he saved only Noah and his family, when all the rest of the world were drowned; that Lot and his house were preserved, and all Sodom and Gomorrah left to be consumed: Moses never speaks of it as a lessening or disparagement to the goodness of God, that he chose Israel alone for his peculiar people, who were the fewest of the nations; nor do I find that our opponents charge God with a want of justice, goodness, or mercy, that he sends the gospel to some nations, when the far greater part of the world are left in darkness and ignorance; so that we ought to be very tender in charging the proceedings of divine sovereignty with being opposite to all or any of God's moral perfections.

But further: If it could be proved, that God owed all men

saving grace, it must be owned to be an unjust thing in him to deny it to any; but God is not obliged to give any man saving grace. The number of the elect is not so few as some would represent it to be; they are "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," Dan. vii. 10, compared with Rev. v. 11. The reprobate, strictly speaking, are not condemned for not doing that which it was impossible for them to do, because God had refused to give them his saving grace; but for not doing what was in their power, and which they themselves made impossible to be done, by a long course of indulged wickedness. We have as much reason to charge God with injustice, cruelty, and unmercifulness, in condemning and destroying all the fallen angels, as in determining to leave some of fallen mankind to perish: and will any attempt to say it is unjust in God to determine to save only some of mankind, when he would have been just if he had destroyed them all? Or shall we presume to affirm that God is unmerciful, "because he has mercy on whom he will have mercy?"

The same objection will lie against the divine perfections, from God's not eventually saving all, as from his determination not to save all; for he could save every man if he would; and yet our opponents will not attempt to affirm, that all men are saved in the event. God could have created all men perfect, as well as the first man; he could have preserved Adam and all his seed in innocence; or, after man had fallen, and made himself vile and miserable, God could change the hearts of all men, and convert and save them all, if he so pleased. Why then do our opponents charge our doctrine with unmercifulness, when the same charge equally lies against their own opinion?

To proceed a little further, as to the supposed unmercifulness of our doctrine. For my own part, I confess, that one great reason why I believe and espouse the doctrine of special determinate election, is, because of the *mercy* of it. I hope, I am not mistaken; for, to me, our doctrine appears most to illustrate the mercy of God, and to be most friendly to mankind; nay, there is, in my opinion, no friendship nor mercy in any other doctrine but this. To make this good, be pleased to observe, that all, in fact, are not eventually saved; that no more shall be saved than what are saved; and that all who are saved, are elect to salvation. Our opponents never attempted to affirm that all men are actually saved; no one will pretend to assert that more shall be saved than what are saved; all that are saved, we say, are elected to salvation. Where is the unmercifulness of this doctrine? We do not narrow or confine salvation, but make it, in fact, as extensive in its subjects, as those who oppose themselves to us. The difference between them and us, is not about the number who are saved; we both agree

in that; but what we differ about is, the manner of their obtaining salvation. We say, they are saved by virtue of the electing love of God; they say, they are saved because they rightly improve their own free will. We affirm them to be saved in such a way, as ascribes all the glory to God; the way of salvation which they hold is such, as leaves great room for man to glory. Thus far our doctrine appears to be as merciful as theirs. But further,

Our opponents' scheme makes the salvation of each man but barely possible; our doctrine makes the salvation of millions of men absolutely certain; so that hence ours appears to be more merciful than theirs: for I would ask any unprejudiced person, whether a doctrine that secures the salvation of some, whether one in ten, or nine in ten, God only knows, does not better deserve the epithets of friendly and merciful, than a notion that puts the salvation of every one upon a bare possibility, whence it may happen that, even according to their tenets, no one may be saved at last? Let none call what I am going to say cant, or a declamatory harangue, to captivate the passions. Suppose God was to summon all mankind before him, and to demand a choice of them which of the two schemes they would give into; would they not prefer that which infallibly secures the salvation of a chosen number, to that which puts the salvation of each one upon a dangerous uncertainty? From what has been said, it appears that our doctrine is more merciful than that of our opponents.

I shall venture to go one step higher, and that is, to prove that the doctrine of our opponents is an *unmerciful* doctrine, because it is so far from ascertaining the salvation of any, that it renders the salvation of each man a moral impossibility. The opinion of those who differ from us, as to the doctrine of election, so far as it relates to salvation, I take to be this: That it is a *conditional* choice, upon our perseverance in a life of holiness; *i. e.* if I may give you the sense more fully, in other words, it is God's choosing persons to salvation, upon the conditions of faith, repentance, and perseverance in holiness. Upon this, now let me observe, that they will not allow that God has determined to give to any man this faith, repentance, and perseverance; nay, absolutely deny that God has ordained one single person to faith, repentance, and perseverance to the end; so that the performance of these conditions depends entirely upon the will of man. But if this is the case, the question, which was once put to our Lord, may very properly be asked here, *Who then can be saved?* For,

(1.) If the Scriptures have represented men, as, by nature, in a state of death; to every good work reprobate; not sufficient of themselves to speak a good word, or think a good thought; as not able to do any thing without Christ, and by many such



the like declarations; then how is it possible that they should by their own innate power, ever perform these weighty and extensive conditions?

(2.) If faith, repentance, and perseverance in holiness, are the gifts of God, and God has not designed or determined to give them to any one single person; is it not impossible that any one should believe, repent, and persevere? God does not give good gifts at random, or by accident, without determining both the quality of the gift, and the number of the objects; but "every good and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James i. 17. It immediately follows, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." James i. 18. God is of one mind, and who can turn him? His purposes, like his nature, are invariable; and, because they are so, his gifts are without repentance, and he quickens and saves whom he will. What are God's actings, but the accomplishment of his purposes? Purposes are actions decreed, actions are purposes executed. As the promises of God are the revelation of his purposes of good will, so the actings of God upon his creatures are the execution of his purposes, and the fulfilment of his promises. Well now, if faith, repentance, and perseverance in holiness, are the gifts of God, and he has not purposed to give them to any; and where there is neither purpose in God, nor promise from him, there can be no saving gifts; if so, how is it possible that any man can be saved?

(3.) If Adam, in innocence, who was created perfect, and with a plenitude of power to do what God required, if, I say, he did not fulfil the law of nature, how is it possible that we, who are fallen imperfect creatures, should obey the law that we are under? A perfect creature must be much more able to yield a perfect obedience, than an imperfect creature is to yield imperfect; because, when the nature is once vitiated, it is more difficult to perform one good action, than it is for a perfect nature to yield perfect obedience. Should any say, this is begging the question, to assert that we are imperfect creatures, we have as much power for obedience, as Adam ever had; supposing it, but not granting it, then,

(4.) If Adam did not perform the condition of his covenant, which was to refrain only from eating of the forbidden fruit; but, upon a temptation of the serpent, did, contrary to his allegiance to God, and the high obligations he was under to comply with the divine command, eat of the fruit of the tree, of which God had said, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17; if he could not suspend a single act, even though he, it is not improbable, knew this was to be the test of his obedience, and that his own and the fate of his posterity depended upon it: I say, if he, in these circumstances, without

supernatural aids, could not refrain a single act, how is it possible for us, who are surrounded with innumerable temptations, to perform the conditions of our covenant, to believe, repent, and persevere in holiness, which require the exertions of millions of positive acts? To suspend acting, is much easier than to put forth an act; but what comparison is there between a perfect man's refraining one act, and an imperfect man's putting forth innumerable acts? When Adam then could not do the former, will any one now presume to say he is able to do the latter? So that, upon the whole, the doctrine of an universal conditional election appears to be unmerciful, while the mercy of God shines with a bright lustre in the doctrine of absolute particular election.

Thus I have finished what I design doctrinally from the words. Let the arguments and objections be taken together, compared, and weighed, and I doubt not but the balance will be found to be in favour of our doctrine; and it will appear evident that God has decreed, before all worlds, the certain salvation of a determinate number of mankind, and left the rest to themselves. I have designedly studied great plainness of speech, as best suited to the solemnity and importance of the subject, that I might the more readily be understood of all, and that *your faith might not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God*. I have endeavoured to set the whole matter in the clearest and most obvious light I could, to digest my proofs in a natural order, and to represent the objections in the fairest and strongest manner. I hope no one will have reason to say that I have been combating with a man of straw of my own making, or fighting with my own shadow; and, should it appear that I have given an invidious, harsh, or false turn to any argument or objection of our opponents, I should be heartily sorry for it, and most readily acknowledge my fault.

#### APPLICATION.

1. If there be such a doctrine as particular election in Scripture, then it ought to be preached. Some absolutely deny the doctrine; others think it improper to be taught, because they apprehend that many persons may draw ill consequences from it. But since Christ and his apostles preached it, and since the adversaries are not so unwearied in their endeavours to oppose and condemn it, it must well become us, who believe it, to assert and vindicate it, to the best of our power: for, if this doctrine is not to be preached, because some do or may abuse it, for the same reason all the special truths of the gospel must be laid aside, as useless or hurtful; and so a Christian must starve, for fear a profane sinner should grow wanton in a plenty of provision. Who are they, generally speaking, that

revile and abuse this doctrine, but the unthinking, giddy, and profane part of the world, who, when they boast of a power to save themselves, make use of it only to their own destruction; and, when they assert good works to be the only way to heaven, are very backward to perform any? Besides this, that there are no real disadvantages that can arise from the prudent preaching of this doctrine, there are several positive advantages that attend the preaching of it. For instance: the gospel cannot be preached entire without it; it is the foundation of all those great and precious promises that are contained in the Bible: the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ would be little better than a nullity without it: it tends to display the divine sovereignty, and to give us a lively representation of the love and grace of God to sinful men: it is a great comfort and support to Christians, in a time of common defection and temptation: it is an effectual antidote against the swelling pride of man, and is, as I have before observed, one of the most powerful arguments to holiness and good works.

2. Is there an election of particular persons to salvation? then we ought to inquire whether we are of the happy number. How many God has chosen who can tell? But was the number never so few, every one should be putting the question, *Lord, is it I?* Who knows but I may be a chosen vessel, and the lot may fall upon me? However, I will, by the grace of God, be found in the way of means; I will wait at the pool; I will do the best I can to promote my own salvation. We can lose nothing by endeavouring; nay, when God inclines and enables us to put forth endeavours after salvation, we have good ground to hope that he has a design to save us.

3. Is it through faith and holiness that God chooses persons to salvation? then let us not separate the means from the end, or ever think of getting to heaven without faith and holiness. Let every one be persuaded to mind his duty, being fully assured that duty and privileges, the means and end, are inseparably connected together by the decree of God.

4. Let those be very thankful to God, who have ground to hope that they are chosen of him to salvation. Praise is comely for such as you: consider the greatness and freeness of the blessing; to be chosen to an eternal crown of glory; to be chosen out of a corrupt mass; to be chosen when so many learned, rich, and honourable are rejected; to be chosen before you had done any good, and without regard to foreseen merit: how great is the mercy! how rich the grace! Let your souls continually magnify the Lord, and let your hearts rejoice in the God of your salvation. This will be the glorious employment of an eternity in heaven, and it ought to be the delightful practice of all the saints on earth.

5. Let believers give diligence to make their calling and

election sure. You begin at the wrong end when you put the question thus; Am I elected? The question should be, Am I called? You are to make your election sure by your vocation: If you are called, you must be elected; for, "whom God predestinated, them he also called," Rom. viii. 30. He calls them, not only externally and ministerially, by his word; for, in this respect, *many are called*, though *few are chosen*; but internally and efficaciously, by his Spirit, making them to listen, and be obedient to his call. Have you then ever been made to see your lost and miserable state by reason of sin? Have you been deeply and inwardly affected at your wretched condition? Have you been enabled to receive and rest upon Jesus Christ, as your only Saviour? Is Christ, in all his offices, precious to you? Do you prize the ordinances of God, and communion with him therein? Is it your desire to recommend the grace of God, and adorn the gospel of Christ, by a virtuous and holy conversation? You may then conclude that you are called and elected; and you have a right to take the comfort of it. Be diligent then in this necessary work of examination; converse much with the sacred oracles of God; look narrowly into your own hearts, and pray earnestly to God for the sealing of his Spirit; and if the Spirit of God, by attesting to your vocation, witnesses with your spirits that you are children of God, you may be assured that you were predestinated to this adoption; and if a man is a child, then an heir, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ: "Give diligence then to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered to you, abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;"

To whom, with the eternal Father and Holy Spirit be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.  
Amen.

THE  
DOCTRINE OF  
ORIGINAL SIN, STATED AND DEFENDED

IN TWO SERMONS,

By MR. PETER GOODWIN,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON I.

ROMANS v. 19.—By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

THE part allotted to me in these exercises, is to endeavour to open and vindicate the doctrine of *original sin*; a doctrine of very great importance, and wherein we are all highly concerned: it is one of the fundamental truths of our Christian profession. It lies (says the excellent Dr. Owen\*) in the very foundation of all wherein we have to do with God, with respect to our pleasing him here, or obtaining the enjoyment of him hereafter. It has a very great influence upon the important truths concerning the person of Christ, his mediation, the fruits and effects of it, and all the benefits we are made partakers of thereby. Without a supposition of this, none of them can be truly known, or savingly believed. Accordingly it is a doctrine that the church of God was in full possession of, and was generally held and acknowledged for the first four centuries, till Pelagius, and his followers denied it and disputed against it. But, notwithstanding this was an undoubted article of primitive Christianity, notwithstanding the great importance of it, and the great concernment we all have in it, it is a doctrine that is greatly opposed, and treated with contempt, and profane banter and ridicule, by many in the age in which we live. And as it cannot therefore be deemed unseasonable, so it is highly becoming those who have the real interests of religion at heart, and a just zeal for the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of the gospel, to stand up in the defence of it: nor can any justly be offended at it, so long as we make use of no unwarrantable methods, but only endeavour, in the pleading for what we apprehend to be *the faith once delivered to the saints*, to speak the truth in love.

This, therefore, I shall now attempt: and as original sin consists of two parts, that which is *imputed* to us, and that which

\* Preface to his *Treatise on Indwelling Sin*.

is *inherent* in us, and it is necessary we should be acquainted with both, that we may look after that two-fold righteousness we have in Christ, his righteousness imputed to us in justification, and an inherent work of righteousness wrought in us, in sanctification, I shall consider each of these a little distinctly.

The former of these is a matter of pure revelation, and therefore we must regulate all our conceptions about it by, and look for the confirmation of it only in, the Scriptures. It was very agreeable to reason to suppose, that the great and holy God made man pure and upright, and placed him under a wise and equitable law for his conduct; but whence sin took its rise, and what was the origin of all that moral evil that is in the world, and that long train of miseries that attend it, was a question too puzzling for mere natural light to resolve. This we are wholly indebted to the Scriptures for; and it is, I think, very clearly expressed in the words of my text.

The apostle having fully proved the doctrine of justification by faith, proceeds, in this excellent chapter, in the explication, illustration, and application of that truth. He shows us the precious benefits and privileges that flow from justification: he acquaints us with the ground and foundation of it, the death of Christ; and that he might affect his own heart and ours with that unspeakable love of God, which provided a Saviour, and sent his only begotten Son into the world, for that purpose, he considers the character and circumstances of the persons for whom he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and laid down his life: they were not friends, and such as were able to oblige him; but "God herein commended his love, that when we were sinners," ungodly enemies, and without strength, either to help ourselves, or be serviceable to him, "Christ died for us," ver. 6—8. He illustrates it also from the consideration of the precious fruits of his death, ver. 9—11. And then further, to show our obligations to him, he runs a parallel between the communication of sin and death by the first, and of righteousness and life by the second Adam. This not only illustrates the great truth he is discoursing of, but tends very much to the commending the love of God, and the comforting the hearts of true believers, in showing a correspondence between our fall and our recovery; and not only alike, but a greater power in the second Adam to make us happy, than there was in the first to make us miserable. He compares them together as two public heads and representatives of men, and copiously enlarges upon and explains the parallel, ver. 12—21, and comprises the sum and substance of the whole in the verse which is my text: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Our present concernment lies in the former clause, which acquaints us how mankind came to be involved in sin and misery;

I say mankind: for that by *many* here, we are to understand all Adam's posterity, that descend from him by ordinary generation, is universally acknowledged; but it does by no means follow from thence, that the *many* in the latter clause is of an equal extent and latitude; for the design of the apostle here, is not to treat of the extent of Christ's benefits, but to show the manner of their conveyance to those who are happily admitted to share in them, whatever their numbers be; that Christ communicates grace and righteousness to all whom he represents, i. e. the *elect*, as Adam transferred sin and death on those whom he represented, which are *all men*. So that the great truth contained in the text, which I am to consider and improve, is this: *By one man's disobedience all mankind are made sinners*.

In speaking to which proposition, I shall, by divine assistance, observe the following method:

I. I shall inquire what the *one man's disobedience* here intended is.

II. I shall show in what sense *all mankind* are said to be *made sinners*, by that one man's disobedience.

III. I shall consider the *ground* of this dispensation.

IV. I shall endeavour to vindicate the *justice* and *equity* of it.

I. Let us inquire what the *one man's disobedience* here intended is.

There is no doubt, but by the *one man*, is meant the first man Adam, the father of us all: and it is, I think, plain, from the scope and diction of the apostle, in the context, that by this one man's disobedience, is meant the first sin only; that first act of disobedience, in eating the forbidden fruit, by which man first cast off the allegiance that was due to his Creator. It is the sin of that one man, as he was a common person, the federal head and representative of mankind, and while he continued such, but he ceasing to be such, upon his breach of the covenant; hence it is only that *first sin*, and not the sins he afterwards committed, by which the *many* are said to be made sinners. The *ἡ παρακοή*, the *disobedience*, here is the same with the *ἡ ἁμαρτία*, the *sin*: that is, the *first sin*, which, entering into the world, rendered not only Adam himself, but all mankind liable and obnoxious to death, verse 12. It is the same likewise with the *το παραπτωμα*, the *offence*, or the *fall*, as the first sin of Adam is generally called, by which many are dead, by which death has obtained dominion over us, and by which "judgment is come upon all men to condemnation," verse 15, 17, 18. The word is all along used in the singular number, implying, says a judicious writer,\* that judgment does not come

\* Mr. Ridgely on Original Sin.

upon all men to condemnation for all the sins that Adam committed, but for that *one offence* which was the first instance of sin in this lower world. And as this seems plain, from the scope and reasoning of the apostle, so some think it is expressly asserted by him: for what we read, *By the offence of one*, may be read, *By one offence*, δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος, *judgment came, upon all men to condemnation*, verse 18, and so our margin reads it. And there is a various lection in one place; for while most copies read, τῷ τῷ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι, *By one man's offence, death reigned by one*; which our translators follow in the text, there are some that read τῷ ἐνὶ παραπτώματι, *by one offence*; which Beza follows, and our translation in the margin. Now, the *disobedience*, in my text, being the same with that *one offence*, or fall, mentioned before, it must be meant of that first act of disobedience, by which Adam fell from his original state of righteousness and of happiness.

II. I shall inquire in what sense *all mankind* are said to be *made sinners*, by that one man's disobedience; and this, I humbly conceive, is by *imputation*. I grant that we may be said to be made sinners by the first man, as we derive from him natures universally corrupted and depraved; of which, God willing, I shall speak afterwards; but I cannot help thinking, that the proper and direct intendment of the apostle here is, that we are made sinners by the imputation of the guilt of the first sin to us.

This, I am very sensible, is denied by many. The Pelagians and Socinians agree in saying, that Adam's sin was merely personal; that by it, indeed, as being the first sin, it is said, that sin entered into the world, but that his posterity were not concerned in it; nor are they liable to any punishment for it. And with these do fully agree, not only our modern infidels, one of whom professes, that original sin was ever a difficult pill with him to swallow, his reason stopping it in his throat, and not having faith enough to wash it down;\* but also many that would be accounted good Christians, and staunch churchmen: "What am I concerned, says one,† in Adam's sin, which had never my will, or consent, more than in the sin of Mahomet, or Julius Cæsar; nay, (*horresco referens*) than in the sins of Beelzebub and Lucifer." They allow, indeed, we may be said to be made sinners by Adam, by imitation; as Jeroboam is said by way of example, to have *caused Israel to sin*; but as we can no more, in this sense, be said to be made sinners, by the disobedience of the first man, than we can by the disobedience of our immediate parents, or of any other person; so this cannot, by any considerate mind, be imagined to answer the strong expressions made use of in our context. We are told, that *by*

\* Blount's Oracles of Reason, p. 10.

† Glanvil of the Pre-existence of Souls, c. 2.



*one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and therefore death hath passed upon all men, because all sinned in him: Death reigned by one*, by this one man's offence, and that over those who were incapable of imitating him; *and by this one offence, judgment is come upon all men to condemnation*. These expressions are very strong, and do more than intimate, that death was not only the consequence of Adam's sin, with respect to himself, but is a misery and punishment entailed upon all his posterity, for that first sin of his.\*

This is so manifest, that our more sober and thoughtful Arminians see a necessity of abandoning the foregoing pretence, of our being made sinners only by imitation. They plead, that we are said to have sinned in Adam, and to be made sinners by his disobedience; not, indeed, by the imputation of his sin and disobedience to us, but only by becoming obnoxious to that death, which was the punishment of his sin. Thus a late annotator,† of no small fame, says, "This is the only sense in which we are said, by the disobedience of the first man, to be made sinners, namely, by being subject to the death, and temporal calamities and miseries, which came upon all mankind for Adam's sin; so that we sinned in him, and, by his disobedience, became sinners, by a metonymy of the effect, by suffering the punishment which God had threatened to him for it." Herein he follows Grotius, and produces several scripture testimonies to prove, that the Hebrew word signifies both *sin* and *punishment*; which pains might well have been spared, because as no body denies it, so it is nothing to the purpose. This we are told, is the interpretation given of these passages by the Greek expositors, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Œcumenius, and Theophylact; and it is generally adopted by the gentlemen on the other side of the question. But besides, that it is difficult to conceive how we should become liable to the punishment, and how it is reconcilable with the justice and righteousness of God to inflict that punishment upon us, if we were no way chargeable with the guilt of that sin, since punishment always supposes guilt. I say, besides this, such an interpretation seems to reflect absurdity upon the apostle and his reasoning; in the twelfth verse, death is said to have "passed upon all, because all sinned" in Adam, which is allowed, by the annotator, to be parallel with my text. Now, there the apostle plainly gives a reason why the sentence of death passed upon all men; and if this be the only meaning of our being said to sin in Adam, it makes him guilty of the absurdity of proving *idem per idem*. The sense, according to this interpretation, must be, death has

\* ————— In me all  
Posterity stands cursed! Fair patrimony,  
That I must leave ye, sons!—MILTON.

† Whitby in Rom. v. 12.

passed upon all men, because all men are subject to death, or death has passed upon all men, because death passes upon all men. An absurdity which so great a reasoner as the apostle Paul, abstracting the consideration of his being inspired, could never have been guilty of.

There is therefore certainly something more than this intended in the expression, and that is, that we are made sinners by having that one man's disobedience imputed to us. Not that we actually and personally committed that act of disobedience; that is impossible, since we did not then exist; and the very notion of imputation clears us from the ridiculous charge of such an absurdity; for the judicial accounting that to us, which is not inherent in us, and was not personally done by us, is what is meant by imputation, and that we are thus made sinners by Adam's disobedience, appears both from the signification of the word here made use of, and from the scope of the apostle in this context. When we are said to be *made sinners*, the word *κατεσθηναν*, properly signifies the making us such by a *judicial act*. We are constituted sinners, i. e. in the divine economy and administration accounted as criminals. That act of disobedience is reckoned to and charged upon us; and we are dealt with as if we had actually sinned. This signification the word will very well bear; and that it is the meaning of it here, seems very plain to me, from this whole discourse of the apostle. We are so made sinners, as to be made liable to death, the punishment of sin: this has passed upon all men, because all are reckoned to have sinned in Adam. It has reigned, from Adam successively, in all the various generations of the world, and that even over them who had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression, or infants who die before they come under the guilt of any actual sin: how could they be made liable to death, the punishment of sin, if they had not been judged or reckoned to have sinned? Does not the supposition reflect upon the justice of God, in punishing men for an act they were no way concerned in? Nay, does it not imply a contradiction, since punishment always supposes guilt? Whether God, by his sovereign power, might not have inflicted death on an innocent creature, I do not dispute; but that an innocent creature should be guilty of death, seems, to me, a contradiction; for death being the wages of sin, to be guilty of death, is some way or other to have sinned. We could not sin in our own persons before we existed; and therefore if, by the first man's disobedience, we are made guilty of death, it must be by the imputation of the guilt of that sin to us. This also seems plain, from the verse immediately preceding my text, where, by the *one man's offence, judgment* is said to have *come upon all men to condemnation*.—*Judgment* is not in the original; but it is not material, whether we supply *sin*, according to some;

or *judgment*, according to others; for, which ever of them is meant, it is expressly said to be to *condemnation*; "which word," says a learned writer,\* "cannot, with any manner of consistency, be taken in any other than a forensic sense; and, perhaps, it is never used in any other sense in the New Testament." Now, we are thus brought under condemnation by the offence of one, even Adam; and for one person to be condemned for the offence of another, must necessarily argue the imputation of that offence to him, otherwise the condemnation would not be just. If, therefore, all mankind are liable to judgment or condemnation by this one offence, although not actually committed by them, it must necessarily be placed to their account, i. e. imputed to them.

This further appears from the manifest scope of the apostle in this context, which is to illustrate the doctrine of justification, of which I have treated before, and to represent the way in which we are made partakers of the righteousness of Christ. This is the professed design of the comparison he here makes between Adam and Christ: it is as if he had said, as Adam transmits sin and death to all his natural posterity, so Christ conveys righteousness and justification of life to all his spiritual seed. This he illustrates in the preceding verses, and gives us the sum of the whole in my text, that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One are many made righteous." The way of conveyance in both is the same. Now, how are we made righteous by the obedience of Christ, but by the imputation of that obedience to us? And if so, when we are said to be made sinners by the disobedience of the first man, the antithesis requires that it should be meant of our being made sinners, by the imputation of his disobedience to us. This is so necessary a consequence from the apostle's reasoning, that the deniers of the imputation of Adam's sin, of course deny the doctrine of justification by imputed righteousness: and, perhaps, it is from the pride of men, in refusing to submit to the righteousness of Christ, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, that they have set themselves so much to oppose the imputation of Adam's sin. This, in particular, seems to have been the case of Socinus, who confesses that this discourse of the apostle gives great countenance to the doctrine of justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.† But not relishing that, he sets himself, with all his cunning and artifice, to oppose the imputation of the sin of Adam to his natural posterity, being very sensible that if that is admitted, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to his spiritual seed will unavoidably follow, from the reasoning of the apostle in this context. But it is time to proceed.

\* Mr. Ridgely on Original Sin.

† Socinus de Servatore, Par. 4, cap. 6.

III. I shall consider the *ground* of this dispensation; and this is, that Adam, in his first act of disobedience, was not only the *natural root*, but the *federal head* of all his posterity. I take it for granted that those words, containing God's prohibition, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 16, 17, are to be considered not only as expressive of a law, strictly speaking, or a mere declaration of the will of God, as a Sovereign, but as containing in them a covenant transaction between God and Adam: it is not, indeed, styled there a *covenant*; but it is usually called so by divines, and it really was so: for in the threatening of death annexed, in case of disobedience, there was included a promise, in case of obedience, of the continuance of his then happy circumstances, and his confirmation therein, if not of a superadded happiness: this was proposed to Adam, and he agreed and consented to it, which is the formal nature of a covenant. The sum was this; that if he persevered in his innocency, the grace and strength he had should be continued to him, and he should live and be happy; but if he disobeyed God, he should lose the advantages he was then possessed of, and be subject to death and misery, both in this and in another state. This, I think, is sufficiently proved by a reverend and learned writer,\* whose praise is in the churches, so that I need not enlarge upon it.

Now, in this covenant, Adam was considered not as a private, but a public person, sustaining the persons of all mankind: he was constituted the head and representative of all his posterity, and we were in him, not only seminally, but federally also: we were in him as our natural root and common parent, from whom we descend by natural generation: we were in his loins, and a part of him, when he fell, and, upon this account, his disobedience may be reckoned ours; as Levi, not born till many years after, is said to have paid tithes to Melchisedec, because he was in the loins of Abraham, Heb. vii. 9, 10. But the principal ground of the imputation of his sin to us is, that we were in him as our federal head and representative. If this can be proved, the doctrine we are confirming will be established upon a firm and unshaken foundation. And we need, I think, look no further for the proof of it than our context: for why is the emphasis all along laid upon this *one man*, as him, by whom, and this one man's *sin*, as that, by which we are made sinners, and subject to death and condemnation? Why were we not made sinners by Eve, who was first in the transgression, and was a root of propagation as

\* Mr. Ridgely on Original Sin. See also Bishop Bull's Ser. Vol. III. Disc. 5.

well as Adam? Why not by the sins he committed after his fall, when he still continued to be the natural root of mankind, and we were all still seminally in him? Nay, why not by the sins of our intermediate parents? It is very difficult, if not impossible to assign any other reason for this, but because Adam was considered as our public covenant-head and representative, and that he himself ceased to be so, upon his breach of the covenant by his first act of disobedience. And this seems the direct intendment of the apostle, verse 14, where he calls Adam, *the figure or type of him that was to come*. Some by *him that was to come*, understand mankind; and give us this as the sense that all are, by Adam's disobedience, subject to death, even infants that never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, because, when he committed that act, he was the type of all men that were to come, and were to succeed him, and they were all represented in his person; and so is an express assertion of the truth we are pleading for. But it will unavoidably follow, from the common interpretation, if by *him that was to come*, we do, as I think we ought to, understand Christ. For in what was Adam a type of Christ? Not as he was a man certainly, consisting of soul and body, since, in that respect, all who lived before Christ might as justly be called types of him as Adam; but it was in some peculiar circumstance in which he was distinguished from all others, and that is, he was the federal head and representative of his posterity. It was in this regard, that in the covenant transactions between God and him, and in the consequent event of those transactions, he was a public person; so Christ the antitype certainly was. He is the Head of the new covenant, and acted as a public Person and the Representative of all that the Father had given him: he dealt with God for them, as their Head and Representative, died for them, rose for them, entered within the veil for them, and did all that he did for them; and in this regard was Adam his type; God dealt with him, and he acted as the federal head and representative of his posterity; so that what he did in that station, and under that character, we may be said to have done in him; and what was done in him, may be said to have been done to us in him. And this appears from the subsequent reasoning of the apostle, where he considers the influence of these two heads, what is conveyed by them, and the manner of conveying it to those that are respectively in them; that as Adam, the type and head of the first covenant, conveys sin and death to all that were in him naturally, so Christ, the antitype and the head of the new covenant, conveys righteousness and life to all that are in him spiritually; so that we need not look any further than to this discourse of the apostle, to prove that Adam

was the federal head and representative of all his posterity. "But this," says a right reverend expositor,\* who represents it as a harsh and inconceivable opinion, "is only a single proof; and, when we have not a variety of places, proving any point in which one gives light to another, we cannot be so sure of the meaning of any one place, as to raise a theory, or found a doctrine upon it." To which I answer: that if this was the case, and we had no other proof, this is not a just exception, because a single proof, if it is valid, is and ought to be esteemed a sufficient proof. But this really is not the case, for we have other scriptures that give light to, and tend to confirm this truth; and particularly where the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 45, compares Adam and Christ together, under the notions of the first and second man, and the first and last Adam. In what respect is Christ called the second man? It cannot be meant in order of time and number, for so Cain, and not Christ, was the second man: it must therefore be in some respect, in which there were but two men, in which there was one, and but one, before him; and it is very difficult to conceive in what respect this could be, unless as he was a public person, and head of all his spiritual seed. As, if Christ was a second public person, there must have been a first public person, and that must be Adam, since no man, if not Adam, was ever the public head of all mankind: thus he is also called the *last Adam*, because typified by the first, and bearing some resemblance to him. But in what does this resemblance consist, if not in this, that as Adam was a public person, and head of the first covenant, and as such conveyed sin and death to his natural posterity, so Christ is a public person, and head of the new covenant, and the meritorious as well as effective principal of the resurrection, by which his spiritual seed shall have a full and complete deliverance from all the effects of Adam's sin? "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 22. From all which it appears, that Adam was not only the natural root, but the federal head and representative of his natural posterity, and this is the ground and reason of the imputation of the guilt of the first sin to us, or of our being made sinners by his disobedience.

IV. It remains, that I endeavour to vindicate the *justice* and *equity* of this dispensation. And here there is a mighty outcry raised, as if we represented God dealing with mankind in a way that would be accounted very unjust and severe, in all methods of human government. A certain writer, who thinks himself qualified to be an advocate for reason, as a sufficient guide in matters of religion, and insolently presumes to direct his Maker what was fit, or unfit for him to do, has boldly pronounced such

\* Bishop Burnet's Exposition of the Ninth Article of the Church of England.

a constitution of things to be wrong, that mankind is not only unkindly, but harshly and unequally dealt with, and insinuates that we have not fair play for our lives, for our souls. But where lies the injustice and inequality of this constitution of things? Is it that one should be punished for the sin of another? This is far from being unjust in all cases. The great God himself, who can do no wrong, but is *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*, has threatened in the second commandment, to visit the iniquities of fathers upon their children; and we have many instances of it recorded in Scripture. Nor did the Pagans think this inconsistent with the divine perfections, as might be proved, by various testimonies, both from their philosophers and poets. Nor is it reckoned unjust in human governments, as in the case of forfeitures by high treason.

If it is objected, that it is delivered as a standing rule of divine justice, that none should be punished but for his own sins, Ezek. xviii. 20: it is answered, that supposing this should be granted to be the standing rule of divine justice, in ordinary cases, (for that it does not hold universally, appears from what has but now been delivered) yet it does not come up to the case before us, because no man is now the federal head and representative of his posterity, as Adam was. That rule holds good only in punishments inflicted for another man's crime, on those who have no manner of concern in it. But that is not the present case, since it has been proved, that by Adam's offence we are all made sinners, and that upon this ground, that we were all considered in him, and as sinning in him, as our head and representative.

But it will be said, that this ground is, indeed, the ground and foundation of the charge of injustice and inequality in this procedure; for where is the justice of Adam's being considered as our representative, and of our being concluded by what he did, when we never chose him, nor had he our consent to be our representative? To this it is answered, that to make Adam our public representative, there was no necessity that such a relation should be conferred upon him, by our explicit consent. It is sufficient that it was done by the righteous appointment of God, who had a sovereign authority to constitute Adam the head of all mankind. God chose him, and there is the highest reason we should acquiesce in the choice, if we consider, that God made as good a choice, as men could possibly have made for themselves. Adam was not only the first man; and common father of mankind, and therefore entitled to that privilege and honour, by the law of nature, as we find the first heads of tribes frequently appearing as public persons, instead of the rest, but he was as perfect as ever any after could have been. He had a perfection of strength to fulfil the conditions of the covenant; and, being the common father of all, had not only the law of

nature, but that of love and conscience, which parents generally have to their children's good, as much as to their own, to oblige and engage him to be faithful.

But, admitting him to be ever so well qualified for this trust, it may be said, we never consented to his transacting for us; and therefore it is hard we should be concluded by what he did. But is there any thing peculiar in this regard to this first covenant transaction with Adam? Have we not frequent instances of it in after-covenant transactions? When God entered into covenant with Abraham and his seed, and appointed circumcision to be the seal of it, were not the seed obliged by it, although incapable of giving an actual consent to it? How else could every child that was uncircumcised be said to break that covenant? So in that covenant agreement between God and the people of Israel, it is said, "Neither with you only do I make this covenant, and this oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day," Deut. xxix. 14, 15; that is, says Bishop Kidder, with your posterity; not only with those that are now in being, but are absent, but with those that are afterwards to proceed from you, and are not yet born, and therefore are not capable of consenting to this agreement; and so it is with covenants and contracts made between man and man, at this day. How often do men oblige their children and heirs, even those that are unborn, to keep the conditions of those contracts? And do any complain of the injustice of this procedure? That our first father therefore should transact for us, without our consent, is so far from being unjust and unequal, that it is justified by the common sentiments and practice of mankind.

If, therefore, there is any injustice, it must be in the matter of the covenant he was placed under: but this cannot be, since God therein required nothing of him, but what he was obliged to, by the law of his creation, as well as what he was able to perform. The most perfect and exact obedience was due from man to God, the author of his being, by the law of nature; and the transgression of this law of nature deserved wrath, and punishment was due to it from the justice of God. In requiring such an obedience, therefore, and that under the penalty of death, there could be no injustice. But then if it is considered, that God likewise promised to reward this obedience, that was due by the law of his creation, not only with the continuance of his present happy circumstances, but a superadded felicity, which man could have no claim to, but from the free promise of God, it is so far from being an instance of severity, that it is an instance of infinite grace and condescending goodness in God. This, some will say, is true, with respect to Adam himself; but if Adam is considered in all this as a public person



and representative, it is equally true with respect to us, since, if he had stood, we had as certainly received the benefit, as, by his fall, we are involved in his guilt and ruin. Would it have been just with God to have judged us innocent in innocent Adam? And is it unjust in God to judge us guilty in guilty Adam? I shall take leave here to produce the sentiments of two very great men. The one an eminent divine:\* "It is an equal rule," says he, "that by the same law, by virtue of which one may come to receive good freely, he should, upon the same terms, receive the contrary evil deservedly, upon offending. As Job said, 'Shall we receive good from God, and not evil?' so may we say here, should we have received the happy fruits of Adam's obedience if he had stood? And should we not receive the contrary, if he fell, through the guilt of his sin? If God had made the law only to have received evil upon his offending, who could have found fault? much less when he put him into an estate, which would have proved so happy for us, if he had not offended." And he goes on to vindicate the justice of God, in constituting Adam our federal head and representative, by the following similitude: "Suppose," says he, "a king should raise up a man, out of nothing, to a great and noble condition, which he also gave him, not for his own person only, but for his seed for ever, might he not make this covenant with him, that if he turned traitor, he should forfeit all for himself, and his posterity likewise be made slaves? And would not this law justly take hold of them, though they were not then born? Yes, God will justify his proceedings by this course in the world, generally in all kingdoms; which shows, that it is the law of nature, and that there is a justice in it; for the law makes the blood of a nobleman, guilty of treason, tainted till restored." The other is an eminent lawyer,† who was well skilled in the nature of laws and penalties, and the reasons of them: "God made man righteous at first," says he, "and gave him a righteous law; and, inasmuch as man owed an infinite subjection to the Author of his being, he owed an exact obedience to this law of his Maker: yet God was pleased to give him this law, not only as the rule of his obedience, but as a covenant of life and death, wherein the first man made a stipulation for himself and his posterity; and this was just, for he had in himself the race of all mankind. All succeeding generations are but pieces of Adam, who had not, or could have, their being but from him, and so it was but reasonable and just for him to contract for all his posterity; and as it was just, in respect of the person contracting, so it was in respect of the manner of the contract. The law, which was his covenant, was a

\* Dr. Goodwin, Vol. III. p. 18.

† Lord Chief Justice Hale's Meditation upon the Lord's prayer.

just and righteous law; a law suitable to the endowments and power of his nature. Again, the blessedness which, by his obedience he was to hold, was not of his own creating or obtaining; it was the free gift of God; and it is but reasonable that the Lord of this gift might give it in what manner he pleased; and it could not be unjust, that the Lord who gave him this blessedness, should give it him under what conditions he pleased; but he gave it him under most reasonable and just conditions, viz. an obedience to a most just and reasonable law, which suited with the ability and perfection of his nature. Therefore when, upon the breach of the covenant by man, he withdrew that blessedness from him and his posterity, he did no more than what was most just for him to do. Thus we stand guilty of that sin which our first father committed, and are deprived of that blessedness and life which our first father had, and the privation of that blessedness and immortality is death." Thus admirably does that very great man clear the justice of God in this affair, and let us see that it is exactly conformable to the laws of reason and equity. I will only add, that if this course yet seems severe, let it be considered, that God has been pleased, out of his abundant goodness, to establish the same rule and method for our salvation and recovery. My text tells us, that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." God has ordained Christ in our nature to be a second Adam; he is all along, in this discourse, considered by the apostle as a public person, and federal head and representative, as the first Adam was; he sustains the persons of all that were given to him by the Father; and God is graciously pleased to reckon what was done by him as done by them, as he looks upon what was done by Adam as done by us; and life and righteousness are conveyed from the one to all true believers, his spiritual seed, as sin and death are conveyed from the other, to all his natural posterity. So that here is no just ground of complaint, since there is sufficient compensation made by Christ for what we lost in Adam, and the mighty benefit redounds to us, in the same way too, that Adam's sin does; for as this is imputed to us to condemnation, so is the righteousness of Christ to justification of life.

#### APPLICATION.

From the whole we may observe, that the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin is no novel doctrine, but a part of primitive Christianity. It was, indeed, acknowledged by the Jews, as the learned Buxtorf has proved, by several testimonies out of their writers, and as bishop Burnet, in his exposition of the ninth article, allows there is good reason to believe, although he reckons it one of the odd things found amongst the Cabbalists.

But it is plain, from this discourse of the apostle, that it was an article of primitive Christianity; and that it was the sentiment of the primitive church, may be proved, not only by citations\* from particular fathers, but the concurrent testimony of an African Synod, held in the year 254, and in which were present three-score and six bishops. A question was proposed to them concerning the time of the baptism of infants, Whether it might be done before the eighth day after their birth, according to the law of circumcision? The Synod agreed that it might; and, amongst their reasons, they have these words to our purpose: "An infant is not to be prohibited from this grace, who, being but just born, is guilty of no sin, but of original, which he contracted from Adam, who ought the more readily to be received to the remission of sins, because not his own but another's sins are remitted to him." And this, to be sure, is the good old Protestant doctrine, which, at the Reformation, was rescued from that darkness and corruption under which it lay obscured in the times of Popery. And this, many think, is what the Church of England means, when, in her ninth Article, she asserts original sin to deserve God's wrath and damnation. Let us therefore endeavour to confirm our faith in, and hold fast this doctrine, and not suffer ourselves to be moved from it, by the slight and cunning craftiness of any who lie in wait to deceive. Let us learn, from hence, to be deeply humbled before God, for that first act of disobedience, which has involved us all in guilt and ruin. Since we are all by that act made sinners, we must all necessarily be children of wrath by nature; and therefore let us not dare to murmur and repine against God, but acknowledge the righteousness of that sentence, which has passed upon us, and justify God under all the evils and afflictions we are exposed to, or exercised with. Abstracting the consideration of the corruption of our natures, and our manifold actual transgressions, there is enough in that first sin, and our concernment in it, to vindicate the equity of the divine proceedings, in the greatest afflictive evils that befall us here. Hereby all the world is justly become guilty before God, and that is reason sufficient why every mouth should be stopped. Let this then fill our souls with an holy admiration of and thankfulness for the wisdom and grace of God, in providing a second Adam, by whose obedience we may be made righteous, as by Adam's disobedience we were made sinners. And as what has been said shows us our need

\* I shall only give a remarkable testimony of Chrysostom: The reason of the apostle's saying so often [by One] is, that when a Jew shall ask, How should the world be saved by the well-doing of One (the righteousness of Christ?) thou mightest be able to say to him, How should the world be condemned by one Adam's sinning. By which words (says Dr. Hammond, on Psal. li. 5,) it appears that this doctrine of the whole world's being under condemnation for the sin of Adam, was such as he thought no Jew would doubt of, for else it could be no fit means to silence his objection against the redemption of the whole world by Christ.

of Christ, so it should make us fervent in praying to God, for the blessed Spirit, to reveal Christ to us, and work in us that faith, by which we may be united to him, that, being found in him, we may not only be acquitted from the guilt of the first man's disobedience, but may be brought, through the abundance of his grace, and the gift of righteousness, to reign in life, by one, Jesus Christ our Lord;

To whom be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

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## OF ORIGINAL CORRUPTION.

### SERMON II.

PSALM li. 5.—Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

THE knowledge of our fall in Adam, and of the dreadful consequences of it, and our recovery by Christ, are the two great hinges, whereon the whole structure of the Christian religion moves, and which go linked together, as it were, hand in hand. As the former cannot be thoroughly understood without taking a survey of the latter, so the latter cannot be laid hold on without a sound knowledge of the former. It is therefore of very great importance and concern to us, both to be established in the belief of the doctrine, and to acquaint ourselves with the nature of original sin: and as the province assigned me is to be assisting herein, I proposed to consider the two parts of original sin, that which is imputed to us, and that which is inherent in us, a little distinctly. The former of these was the subject of my preceding discourse, where I endeavoured to prove, that the first man's disobedience is imputed to us, and to vindicate the justice and equity of it. And I am now to consider the other part of original sin, namely, the *corruption of nature* which is derived to us from him. And, that I may render the words that have been read subservient to this purpose, I shall, through divine assistance, inquire into the true meaning of them; and then endeavour to open and vindicate the great truth contained in them.

This is one of David's penitential psalms, and the occasion of it was his sin with Bathsheba, as we may see in the title, "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba." The story we have at large recorded in his history. 2 Sam. xi. 12. It was a very heinous and complicated wickedness, of which he had been guilty, adultery and murder, and yet he is

supposed to have continued in it for a considerable time, without any expressions of remorse or sorrow for it, till God sent Nathan to convince him of, and reprove him for it: but his conscience being, by this means awakened, he became truly humbled, and, as a testimony of his unfeigned repentance and sorrow for what he had done, composed this penitential hymn, wherein he is very earnest in praying to God for pardon and mercy, and justifies God, and takes shame to himself, by a free and open confession of his sin. He not only penitently acknowledges the particular crime he had committed, with the aggravations of it, and thereby justifies God in the sentence passed upon him, verse 3, 4: but he follows the streams up to the spring head, and laments his original sin, and natural corruption, in the words of my text; "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." It is as if he had said, "This is not the only sin which I have reason to acknowledge and bewail before thee; for this filthy stream leads me to a corrupt fountain: this heinous crime, although drawn out by external temptation, was, indeed, the proper fruit of my own vile nature, which, without the restraints of thy providence or grace, will incline and dispose me to commit these and ten thousand other sins, as occasions offer themselves: not that I mention this in excuse of what I have done; no, this innate proneness to evil ought, and, if I had duly considered it, would have made me more watchful against the temptation, and more diligent to suppress those bad inclinations, which I knew to be so natural, that I brought them into the world with me. I confess it therefore as an aggravation of my sin and folly in dallying with the temptation, and venturing amongst the sparks with such tinder in my heart, and desire to humble myself before thee for it, and implore thy pardon and mercy." So that it is his natural corruption, which is commonly called original sin, because it is as ancient as our original, and because it is the original of all our actual transgressions, that he here confesses and bewails. This is excepted against by some. The learned Grotius thinks there is an hyperbole in the words, and gives us this as the sense: *Non nunc tantum* not now only, but I have often sinned, *a pueritia mea*, from my childhood; as if he only took occasion, from this great crime to confess his other former actual transgressions. But the expressions are too strong to admit this gloss; nor should we relinquish the literal sense of words in Scripture, and have recourse to figures, without a plain necessity, whereas none can be pretended here, unless it be to serve an hypothesis. The Pelagians and Socinians endeavour to avoid the force of this text, and the argument contained in it, for the proof of the corruption of nature, by pretending that David here only confessed his parents' sinfulness, in begetting and conceiving him, and not his own

natural sinfulness, as begotten and conceived: but this is a very forced interpretation; for the word, which we render, *I was shapen*, and which respects not his parents' acts in begetting, but, if we carry it so far, his formation in the womb, wherein they, as well as himself, were passive and not actors, will not bear this meaning. This sense is also inconsistent with his design, which is not to accuse others, but to confess his own sin, and implore pardon and mercy for it; and what an odd plea would this put into the mouth of such a penitent? Although I did not derive sin from my parents, yet they sinned in begetting me, therefore pardon my sin. Besides all this, there is, in truth, no foundation for this interpretation in the nature of things. The Scriptures give us no hint of any sin of this kind that David's parents were chargeable with. On the other hand, we find him mentioning the piety of his mother, that she was God's handmaid, and pleading his relation to her as such. Psalms lxxxvi. 16. cxvi. 16. It is therefore his own sin, and not the sin of his parents, that he here confesses, and it is the sin of his nature, and that which was derived to him by natural generation; *I was shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin*, i. e. from my birth, from my formation in the womb, when my nature was first conveyed to me, and I was constituted a man: as soon as my soul and body were united in the womb (for in that latitude we may understand these phrases of his being shaped and conceived) I was a sinner, having not only the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to me, but having from him a defiled, polluted, corrupted nature derived to me. And thus the general current of interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, both ancient and modern, understand and expound it: and this being the true meaning of the words, I might observe from them several things useful for instruction; as, that the corruption of our nature is a sin; that it is the corrupt fountain from whence all actual transgressions flow; that in the confession of our actual sins, we should be led by these streams to acknowledge and bewail this corrupt fountain of them, and the like.

What I shall at present attempt, is only to illustrate and vindicate this general truth: "That all mankind, descending from Adam, by ordinary generation, are born in sin, and original corruption."

I say, descending from Adam by *ordinary generation*, to except our blessed Saviour, who was born by a supernatural and miraculous conception. But he being excepted, what David here acknowledges concerning himself is true of all mankind besides.

I. I shall briefly show what we mean by this *original corruption*.

- II. I shall prove that we are all *tainted* with it, and that from our birth and formation.
- III. I shall inquire *whence* it is that we are so, and what is the *reason* and *cause* of it.

I. I am briefly to show what we mean by this *original corruption*; and, in general, it is an universal depravation of every part in man since the fall. The Scripture assures us, that *God made man upright*, Eccl. vii. 29, and after *his own image*, Gen. i. 26, 27. There was an habitual conformity of all his natural powers to the whole will of God; his understanding saw divine things clearly and truly, without error or mistake; his will complied readily and universally with the will of God, without reluctance or resistance; his affections were all orderly; he had no unruly appetites or passions, nor was there any vanity or ungovernableness in his thoughts; all the inferior powers were subject to the dictates and directions of the superior without any mutiny or rebellion. Thus was man made upright, after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. But this uprightness and integrity is now lost, the whole soul and body corrupted, and the whole harmony of man dissolved. The image of God is razed out or obliterated, and the image of the devil himself engraved upon the soul; all men, and all in man, being quite out of order. The soul is corrupted with all its faculties; the mind with darkness and ignorance, (Eph. v. 3,) being subject to the sensitive part, and strongly prejudiced against the things of God, 1 Cor. iv. 24; the conscience with stupidity and insensibleness, Tit. i. 15; the will with stubbornness and rebellion, Rom. viii. 7; the affections are become carnal, and placed either upon unlawful objects, or upon lawful in an unlawful manner or degree, Col. iii. 2; the thoughts and imaginations are full of pride, and vanity, and disorder, Gen. vi. 5. And as for the body, that is become a clog, instead of being serviceable to the soul, and all its members and senses instruments of unrighteousness to sin; Rom. vii. 19. It is, I say, in general, an universal depravation of every part in man since the fall; and more particularly it consists in a privation of all good, in an enmity to God and the things of God, and in a propensity to all evil.

It consists in a privation of all that is good. By the first act of sin there was a loss of original purity and righteousness; the image of God, wherein man was created, was defaced, and blotted out, and, wherever this corruption is predominant, there is a total absence of all that is holy and good. The apostle is very express to this purpose; *I know that, in me, that is, in my flesh*, (or in my nature, as corrupted, which is frequently signified by the term *flesh* in Scripture) *there dwelleth no good*

*thing*; Rom. vii. 18, no grace, no holiness, nothing that is truly and spiritually good. We may as soon expect to find good corn growing upon a rock, or on the sand by the sea-side, as expect any good from corrupt nature as such. The new nature cannot commit sin; but the flesh, the old corrupt nature, can do nothing but sin, for it serves and is entirely under the conduct and government of the law of sin; ver. 25; nor is there a bare absence of what is good, but an enmity against it. In fallen man there is not only a weakness and impotence to what is good, whence we are said to be *without strength*, and not sufficient of ourselves to do a good action, to speak a good word, or so much as to think a good thought; but there is besides an averseness to, and enmity against it. We are therefore said to be *enemies in our minds*, nay, to be *enmity*, in the abstract; "The carnal mind (the mind as overspread with natural corruption) is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. It is an enmity that is deeply rooted: the mind, the will, and all the powers of the soul are possessed by it. The best of the flesh, even the wisdom of the flesh, is enmity against God; and it extends itself to all of God, his nature, his properties, his image, his will, his law, his gospel. There is in it a perfect contrariety to the nature, and it does always cross and resist the will of God; so that it is not, and cannot be subject to his laws. This is the unhappy, the wretched temper of thy soul, O sinner, of every soul by nature, until it is renewed by grace; it is full of hatred and enmity against him who is the Author of our being, and the Fountain of our happiness; and herein it evidences itself so to be, that it is not subject to his law, neither, indeed, can be.

Further, it consists in a propensity to all that is evil; not that there is an equal propensity in all to every sin, for some are more inclined to some sins, and some to others; but there is a propensity, more or less, in every one to all sin. All sin whatever is wrapt up in this natural corruption, as one expresses it; and actual sins are but the unfoldings of it, they all proceeding from this corrupt root and fountain, Mat. xv. 29. It is for this reason, as some conceive, that the Septuagint renders *sin* and *iniquity* in the text in the plural number; because there is a plurality of sins in our natural corruption. It is all sin, virtually, because it disposes and inclines to all; and consequently if there is any particular sin we have not fallen into, it is not for want of corrupt principles and dispositions in our nature; but it is owing to the restraints of the providence or grace of God, without which we should break out into as great abominations as were ever committed by the vilest of the sons of men. This being what we mean by original corruption,

II. I shall prove that we are all *tainted* with it, and that from our very birth and formation. That this corruption is general,



and has overspread our whole race, the history and experience of all ages teach us but too evidently. The immediate son of the first transgressor proceeded to such a degree of envy and malice that he murdered his own brother, more righteous than himself. And from thence impiety spread and prevailed in the old world, till Divine patience, no longer able to bear, gave way to justice, which brought in the deluge, and swept mankind, one family only excepted, from off the face of the earth. But, notwithstanding so vast and so astonishing a desolation, this corruption soon showed itself again, in the new world, and that in a religious family too; they had seen a wonderful train of mercies, leading them through a sea of judgments, but nothing of that was able to extirpate an evil so deeply rooted in human nature; and sin still grew with the increase of mankind, till it brought down the fiery vengeance of the Almighty on Sodom, and the neighbouring cities. Notwithstanding those signal and fearful judgments, that in all ages have pursued sin, we find the "hearts of men set in them to do evil." This disease is epidemical. Every man feels in himself a natural antipathy to good, and proneness to evil; and cannot but observe the effects of it in others. Even the wiser pagans, who wanted the light of divine revelation, were sensible of it, and complained, although they were ignorant of the true cause and spring of it; and therefore prescribed various ways and methods for the purifying of souls, and raising them to that purity and perfection to which they supposed they were designed.

It is certain, that in Scripture this general corruption is often mentioned; "God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions: The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," Jer. xvii. 9. It tells us, that "the imaginations of men's thoughts are only evil continually," Gen. vi. 5. And lest we should think this description only belonged to the antediluvian sinners, who had filled the earth with violence, the Lord repeats it again after the flood, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," Gen. viii. 21. It informs us that there is "no man that lives and sins not;" that "there is none good, no, not one; that in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing; and that they who are in the flesh cannot please God:" where, by *flesh*, is meant the natural state of mankind, according to those words of our Saviour; "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," John iii. 6. This, some think, is particularly meant by the sin of the world, which Christ, the Lamb of God, came to take away, it having overspread the whole world; but to be sure it is what is intended by "the sin that dwells in us; by the law in our members, which wars against the law of our minds; by the flesh that lusts against the spirit; and by the old man which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts." These, with many other places of Scripture, to the same pur-

pose, when they are joined to the universal experience of all mankind, are sufficient to settle this point, that, in fact, this corruption is derived to our whole race, and the contagion is spread over all. And, indeed, if it was not thus, what need had there been of a Saviour, and what necessity of regeneration? When we are told, that "Christ is made to us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30, may we not justly infer that we have no wisdom, no righteousness, no sanctification of our own, and that we are not in a capacity to redeem ourselves from the slavery of sin? And when our Saviour says, "Except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and adds this as the reason of it, that "what is born of the flesh, is flesh: and what is born of the spirit, is spirit;" as it shows the absolute necessity of our being born again, so it is an undeniable proof of original corruption; for unless we were corrupted in our first, there would be no need of a second, a new birth.

But this is not all; for we are not only all infected with this sin, but my text informs us, that we are tainted with it from our birth and formation; "I was shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin." I was a sinner as soon as I was a creature, as soon as I was formed; not only from my *birth*, and being *brought forth*, as the first word is rendered in other places, Job xv. 7, and xxxix. 1, Prov. viii. 24, 25, but from my being *warmed*, as the other word signifies, and is rendered in the margin; as soon as I was enlivened in the womb, and my soul was united to my body. This corruption is not contracted only by imitation, nor does it become habitual by custom, or repetition of acts, but it is rooted in the soul, and diffused through it, as soon as the soul is united to the body, and it discovers itself as soon as it is capable either of imitation or acting. God himself testifies not only that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, Gen. viii. 21, but that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, the first that arises in him is evil, only evil, and continually evil, chap. vi. 5. Thus we are told, that man is born not only a vain empty creature, that has nothing in him, but a foolish, stupid, wilful, ungovernable creature, a wild ass's colt, as averse to all that is good and holy, as he is ignorant of all spiritual things, Job ix. 12. To the same purpose the Psalmist informs us, that "the wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies," Psal. lviii. 3. They brought with them into the world natures estranged from God, alienated from the divine life and all goodness; and no wonder then they go astray from God and their duty as soon as they are capable of acting. The foolishness bound up in their hearts presently appears, with the first operations of reason; and they speak lies as soon as they are able to speak at all. And thus what the prophet upbraids

Israel with, is applicable to particular persons; "They were called transgressors from the womb," Isa. xlviii. 8. The words are spoken of them politically considered; they were prone to idolatry from their first formation into a people, and brought with them out of Egypt a strange addictedness to that sin; but they hold true of every one of us. We may all be called transgressors from the womb, being born *children of disobedience*; yea, not only from the time of our coming out of the womb, but of our being *formed* in it. When we first have the nature of men communicated to us, then we may be called *transgressors*; that which conveys our nature, and constitutes us men, conveying sin, and constituting us sinners. And this may be in part the meaning of the apostle, when he tells us that "we are by nature children of wrath," Eph. ii. 2. "We (says he, we Jews as well as you Gentiles, which terms then comprehended all mankind) are children of wrath;" and this not by custom and imitation, but by nature; and one man is as much so by nature as another. We are not only really and truly so, which those who deny original corruption pretend is all that is meant by *nature*, but we are *born* so. As soon as we began to exist, we were children of wrath, and liable to the displeasure of the Most High, having not only the guilt of the first sin righteously imputed to us, but being naturally inclined to what is sinful and vicious, and polluted and defiled with it, even from our birth. So plentiful an evidence does the Scripture give of this truth, that all mankind are tainted with original corruption, and that from their birth and formation. But,

III. I shall inquire *whence* this is, and what is the *reason* and *cause* of it. The general answer to this inquiry is, that Adam having, by his rebellion, lost his primitive rectitude, and contracted an universal corruption, it is from him derived to all his natural posterity. That this was really the case with Adam himself, I might take for granted, as generally acknowledged, was it not for a bold stroke of a certain writer, in favour of infidelity; who, pleading for reason, as a sufficient guide in matters of religion, asserts, that Adam's discerning faculty was so far from being weakened and impaired, that it is represented as being rather improved by his transgression; and this because it is said, "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," Gen. iii. 7, 22. But that this is not meant of any advances in true knowledge, is agreed by the general current of interpreters. "Their eyes were opened," or their consciences were awakened and convinced, and "they knew that they were naked," or stripped, deprived of all the honours and joys of their innocent state, and exposed to all the miseries that might justly be expected from an angry God. Or if, by their being *naked*, is meant their being

without clothes, as indeed seems by their making themselves coverings, their knowing this must intend, not that they were ignorant of it before, but that they found themselves under a necessity of being clothed, which they did not discover till now, as a learned man\* explains it, who makes it an evidence and effect of the corruption of their natures: and it is plain, from the sacred history, that it was such a knowledge of their nakedness, as filled them with shame and fearful apprehensions of the anger of God; "I was afraid," said the man, "because I was naked, and I hid myself," Gen. iii. 10; and hereby they came to know experimentally the good they had lost, and the evil they had done and subjected themselves to. They found such an alteration in themselves; they saw such uncomely motions and disorders in their bodies, and felt such disorder in their spirits, "a law in their members warring against the law of their minds," as they had never been conscious of before, and such as filled them with shame and fear; and consequently this was a proof that their natures were corrupted and depraved.

This being certain, and we being in him, both as our natural and moral principle, we, by propagation from him, derive a corrupted depraved nature, full of impotency, rebellion, and disorder, and this as soon as we are become children of Adam, as soon as our souls are united to our bodies; for it is this union which constitutes us the children of Adam. In him the fountain was poisoned, and all the streams partake of the infection. Hence it is said, that "Adam begat a son, in his own likeness, after his image," Gen. v. 3. Adam was made in the image of God, but having, by his sin, lost the divine image, he begat a son, not in that, but in his own likeness, sinful and defiled like himself; not only a man like himself, consisting of soul and body, but a sinner like himself, guilty and obnoxious, degenerate and corrupt. He propagated, and conveyed to his descendants, that guilt and corruption he had himself contracted.† This Job was not unacquainted with, as appears from that question of his, Job xv. 14: "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" Or if any suppose that uncleanness is here charged upon man comparatively only, and with respect to the transcendent purity of God, which is a very different thing from the uncleanness derived from the fall, there is another passage that will not admit of this construction, Job xiv. 1, &c., where, having presented the miserable condition of man, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble," &c., he expostulates the case

\* Dr. Thomas Burnet's *Demonstration of True Religion*, Vol. II. p. 52, 53.

† It is remarkable that the text does here not speak of Abel, who died without issue; nor of Cain, all whose progeny was drowned in the flood; but of Seth, by whom all mankind has hitherto been continued in the world; which shows that none are exempted from it.—Polhill's *Speculum Theologiæ in Christo*, p. 217, 218.

with God, "Dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest thou me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" As if he should say, Wilt thou be extreme to mark all my errors? Is purity to be expected in a man born of a woman, who is, by the very constitution of his birth, unclean? This is an evidence, says an ingenious author, that this ancient writer was sensible of the evil consequences of the fall, upon the whole race of man, and that we are all corrupt by descent and inheritance. All this is, I think, plain from Scripture; and this being certain, if we cannot account for the *modus*, or manner of conveying original corruption, this should by no means weaken our belief of the thing itself. How it is conveyed, is one of the most difficult questions in the whole scheme of divinity; but no man has reason to deny matter of fact, merely because he cannot conceive how it is. There is an infinity of things in the world of nature which are obvious to our senses, that we can no more account for the *modus* of, than we can of this. Having therefore proved the thing itself, we need not be over solicitous about, nor over nice in inquiring into the manner of it. Thus much is certain, that it is the universal and unchangeable law of nature, that every thing produces its like, not only in regard of the same nature, that is propagated from one individual to another, without a change of the species, but in respect of the qualities with which that nature is eminently affected. This is visible in the several kinds of creatures in the world: they all preserve the nature of the principle from whence they are derived, and retain the vein of their original, and the quality of their extraction;\* "Whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh."

It may be said, True, Adam being defiled, all emanations from him must partake of that vitiated state to which he had brought himself. But the great difficulty is how the souls of his posterity, which are created immediately by God, come to be defiled. If they were, as well as their bodies, by traduction or generation from their parents, it might be less difficult to account for it; for which reason Tertullian, and divers of the western fathers, fell in with that notion: but it is now generally exploded, and it is most agreeable, both to Scripture and reason, to assert them to be immediately created by God. But how then come they to be defiled? To be sure God does not inspire or infuse any impurity into them: this would make God the

\* Do we not every day see a great resemblance between children and their parents, not only in the lineaments of their face, the motions and gestures of their body, but in the most signal and reigning qualities of their minds? The pride and frowardness, humility and meekness, covetousness and ambition; and even the nicer particularities of men's very humours, are oftentimes seen in those children who lost their parents before they were capable of imitation: and therefore were derived down from them by an unseen means as their original corruption. Dr. Delaune's Sermons on Original Sin, p. 22.

author of sin, a thought so impious and so dishonourable to God, that a pious mind cannot but reject it with the utmost abhorrence and detestation. This therefore cannot be admitted: but does it follow from thence that they are created morally pure? Where is the inconvenience? Is there any thing inconsistent with the divine perfections, to suppose them to receive neither purity nor impurity from him, but only their naked essence, and the natural powers and properties flowing therefrom? As a holy God, he cannot infuse into them an impurity; but, as a just and righteous God, he may withhold, and create them void of that original rectitude, holiness, and righteousness, which was the happiness and glory of Adam, in his primitive state, but which by his sin he lost. Nor is there any injustice in it, since Adam was considered as our covenant, as well as natural head and representative, and consequently forfeited this for us, as well as for himself.

A reverend brother, on this argument, says, "God might create a soul guilty, without any impeachment of his perfections, or giving the least ground to suppose him the author of sin; for this is a punishment due to us, for the sin of our first parents. I can also conceive, says he, how God can create a soul impotent to what is good, without any impeachment of his perfections, if we consider the privilege now denied, as having been once given, and then forfeited."\* But then the question still recurs, How comes it then to be defiled? Some think it is the necessary consequence of its being created guilty, and deprived of original rectitude; for whatsoever wants original rectitude, say they, naturally inclines to that which is evil. But this want of original righteousness being supposed, the generality of divines reckon it results from the union of the soul with the body. They say, original sin does not follow either part singly; it comes in neither by the soul alone, nor by the body alone, apart from the soul, but upon the union and conjunction of these. It is the union of these two which constitutes a child of Adam, and as such only we are capable of being infected with his sin.†

But here it is objected, How can this be, since the body being matter, cannot act upon a spirit? But this, as one observes, is *gratis dictum*, more easily said than proved. Cannot the body act upon or influence the soul? How then comes it to pass that so many souls become foolish, forgetful and injudicious, by their union with ill-disposed bodies? Nothing is more sensibly plain and evident than that there is a reciprocal communication betwixt the soul and body, and that the body does as really,

\* Mr. Ridgley's Doctrine of Original Sin, p.

† Mr. Flavel's Treatise of the Soul of Man,

though we know not how, affect the soul with its dispositions, as the soul influences it with life and motion. There are therefore these things to be considered here, that the soul is created guilty; and as the punishment of the first sin, destitute of original righteousness, and having thereby lost its guard and strength to resist, it is easily overcome by that corrupt and disordered matter to which it is united. But does not this seem an unjust cruelty, to condemn souls, not impure, to such an union to a defiled body as should certainly corrupt them? To which it is answered, That God has settled it as a law in the creation, that a soul should inform a body according to the texture of it, and either conquer it, or be mastered by it, according as it should be differently made; that when all things were duly prepared for the propagation of the species of mankind, a soul should be always ready to enter into, and imitate those first threads and beginnings of life. These laws being laid down, Adam, by corrupting his own frame, corrupted the frame of his whole posterity, by the general course of things, and the great law of his creation; so that the suffering this to run through all the race, is no more (only different in degrees and extent) than the suffering the folly or madness of a man to infect his posterity. In these things God acts as the Creator and governor of the world, by general rules, and these must not be altered by the sins and disorders of men; but they are rather to have their course, that so sin may be its own punishment.—Thus have I endeavoured to open and vindicate this general truth, That all mankind, descending from Adam by ordinary generation, are born in sin and original corruption.

#### APPLICATION.

1. From what has been said, the doctrine of original sin and corruption appears to be no new doctrine. It was not invented by St. Augustine; no, it is much older than he, even as ancient as the fall, and has been acknowledged and lamented by the wisest and best of men in all ages. It is a doctrine attested not only by Scripture, but universal experience; and therefore let us not be ashamed to profess it, nor shy of owning it. Let us hold fast the belief of it, and not suffer ourselves to be moved from it, by the sophistry and cavils, and cunning arts of crafty seducers, or by any objections that may be raised against it, from the difficulties attending the *modus* of its conveyance. Nothing more offends carnal reason, and it is therefore no wonder that it meets with the most virulent opposition from the admirers and adorers of that idol. What though we cannot solve all the difficulties attending it, must we not therefore believe the thing itself, when it is so fully asserted in Scripture, and when we

both feel it in ourselves, and see the effects of it in others? Certainly we ought. And when we consider it not only as true but as a doctrine of very great importance, and wherein we are all greatly concerned; the more it is opposed, the more should we endeavour to confirm our belief of it, and to appear in its defence.

2. Let us not only hold fast the belief, but endeavour and pray that we may be suitably affected with this truth. We may, from what has been said, take an affecting view of our state and condition by nature: and as it is useful for us all, even those that are by grace delivered from it, to be looking to it; so it is necessary for them that are under it to be fully acquainted with it. It is, at once, a state full of guilt, and a state full of corruption and defilement: We are all of us guilty before God, having the guilt of the first sin righteously imputed to us; and this renders us obnoxious to the divine displeasure; and we are all polluted and unclean, having corrupted and defiled natures derived to us. A spiritual leprosy has overspread all our powers and faculties, and this renders us loathsome to God, and puts us in a state of separation from him. What a fearful change has sin made in us! The soul, that was made in the image of God, is stripped of its native righteousness and holiness, and invested with contrary qualities: "There is as great a difference, says one, between the corruption of the soul in its degenerate state, and its primitive purity, as between the loathsomeness of a dead carcase, and the beauty of a living body." Sad change, indeed, and to be lamented with tears of confusion. How should this humble us before God, and hide pride for ever from our eyes! How should it fill us with self-loathing and self-abhorrence, affect our souls with shame and sorrow, and cause us to repent in dust and ashes! Especially when we repent of and confess our actual transgressions, we should, in the first place, confess and bewail this corrupt fountain of them; so does David in my text. This psalm is recorded as a public testimony to the church, and the world, of his repentance of a great sin; and, we see, he does, in a particular manner, bewail and acknowledge this. And so did the church in Isaiah's prophecy, Isa. lxiv. 6. When they humbled themselves, they not only acknowledged that their *righteousness was a filthy rag*, but they chiefly complained of the un-

\* Such objections spring out of equal ignorance and pride, and borrow all their force from no wiser or modester a supposition than that of man's omniscience. Yet, as wild and extravagant a principle as it is, the extent of it reaches very far; and it serves the depraved sons of Adam against all the doctrines which they are not willing should be true. It is the sole basis on which infidelity is built, and a most proper foundation indeed for such a superstructure. Thus these men, before they are aware, confirm the truth in question, by so unreasonably opposing it; by this means discovering themselves to be very apparent monuments of the ruins of human nature.—Dr. Delaune's Sermon of Original Sin, before Sir Richard Hoare, Lord Mayor, p. 21.



cleanness of their persons, and that with respect to their natures;  
*We are all as an unclean thing.*

I am sensible some have made it a question, Whether we ought to repent of and be humbled for our original sin? But as the practice of the church, and the penitent psalmist, in my text, shows they made no question of it, so we might evince, from many considerations, that this is a just ground of our repentance and humiliation. I will only mention one, and that is, that this is not only a sin in itself, but the fruitful parent of all other sins. That it is a misery, all grant, who acknowledge the thing itself; but that it is also properly a sin, appears, I think sufficiently from the apostle John's definition, who makes the formality of sin to consist in its opposition to the law, 1 John iii. 4, "Sin is a transgression of the law." Whatever is contrary to the law of God, and forbidden in it, is a sin; but the corruption of our nature is forbidden in the law, and contrary to what God requireth therein: God requires "truth in the inward part;" but original corruption is the want, or rather the reverse of this. We are commanded to be *holy*, and that not only in our actions, but in our natures, for we are commanded to be "holy as God is holy;" and so the want of holiness, which is the privative part of this sin, is forbidden. We are moreover commanded to "love the Lord our God, with all our heart;" and so the heart's inclination to hate God, which is the positive part of this sin, is forbidden. In a word, there is in it a nonconformity to the whole law of God; and a nonconformity to, is a transgression of the whole law. If therefore the apostle's definition is just, the corruption of our nature is a sin; and accordingly it is frequently called so in Scripture, and acknowledged and confessed as such, by the saints, both in the Old and New Testament. So it is by David in our text; and so it is by the apostle Paul, who bewailed and aggravated it exceedingly, Rom. vii. He not only complains of it, as a misery, but he confesses and bewails it as a sin; and lest we should think it a small peccadillo, a sin of an ordinary size, he calls it a *sin exceedingly*, hyperbolically, *sinful*.

Against this it is frequently objected; it is not a sin, because it is not voluntary. But should we admit this rule, that whatever is not voluntary is not a sin, to be just, which will not hold true universally, and without limitation, even when applied to actual sins; yet natural corruption is voluntary in some respects; it is voluntary in its principle and cause. As it was voluntarily contracted by Adam, so he therein being our federal head and representative, his will was the will of us all. But this is not all, for this corruption is inherent in the will, as its subject. If Adam had derived a bodily disease only to his posterity, it might have been an involuntary evil, because the diseases of the body may be foreign to the soul. But when the

corruption invades the internal faculties, it is denominated from the subject wherein it is seated. What though it does not proceed originally from any act of the will in us, yet the consent of the will accompanies it, or rather it is itself the natural bias or inclination of the will to evil, and therefore to say that it is altogether involuntary, is no less than a contradiction. However, it is, to be sure, voluntary in us, with respect to an after-consent, and in the effects of it. Who amongst us can say, We never consented to our natural corruption, were never well-pleased with it, never cherished it by occasions of sin, never strengthened it by acts of sin, and never resisted the means whereby it should be mortified and subdued? All which are evidences of an actual consent. Now, if it is a sin, we ought to repent of it, and be humbled for it; for, that we ought to be thus affected to, and by, every sin, no one will deny. And this would further appear, if I could show that this is not only a sin in itself, but the fruitful parent of all other sins. But, having hinted at this before, I must not enlarge upon it now.

3. What has been said discovers to us our *need* and *necessity* of Christ. We have not only the guilt of the first sin imputed, but we have natures universally defiled derived to us; and as we cannot expiate our guilt, so neither can we, of ourselves, renew and cleanse our natures. This shows us our need of Christ, as he is made of God to the believer, both righteousness and sanctification: we need him as made of God righteousness, to cover our guilt; and as made of God sanctification, to renew and cleanse our natures: his blood is the blood of atonement, and it is the blood of sanctification, and we need it in both regards; and our necessity, in these respects, is indispensable. If we come not to him for pardon and cleansing, for righteousness and sanctification, that guilt and pollution we brought with us into the world will prove our ruin. How slight thoughts soever some may entertain of it, even this exposes us to the wrath and curse of God. As God hates sin, wherever he sees it, so he has denounced a curse against it, and consequently being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, this curse belongs to us, and we are children of wrath by nature: and there is no way to be delivered from it but by Christ, by the blood and righteousness, the spirit and grace of Christ. If, therefore, we desire to be freed from it, let us pray for the gift of the Divine Spirit, to show us our disease, to discover to us our remedy, and to unite us to Christ, by a living and lively faith, that we may be found in him, washed in his blood, clothed with his righteousness, and renewed by his Spirit and grace, that as *in Adam we all died*, died with respect to the guilt, and died with respect to the power of sin; so *in Christ we may*, in both respects, *be made alive*.

4. If any of us are, by the blood and righteousness of Christ,

freed from the guilt of original sin, and have the corruption of our natures, in any measure, cured, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, let us always maintain in our minds a *lively sense of our obligations*, how much we are indebted to the love of the Father, and to the grace of the Son and Holy Spirit, and be for ever thankful for the same. Let us, in the remembrance of it, and of the wretched circumstances of guilt and pollution, from which we are by grace delivered, walk humbly with and before the Lord all our days. And as, by the corruption of our natures, we have so strong a bias to sin, let us not only watch and pray continually, that we fall not into, and that we fall not in and by temptation; but be diligent, in the use of all appointed means, with a dependence upon the grace of the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body, to stop up this corrupt fountain of actual transgressions, and to waste sin in its root and principle.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one God, be all glory and honour, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE  
OF  
PARTICULAR REDEMPTION,  
STATED AND VINDICATED:  
IN FOUR SERMONS.

BY MR. JOHN HURRION,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

THE two first of the following excellent sermons of the late learned and judicious Mr. HURRION, were preached at the same lecture, in which those of others, which precede them in this volume, were delivered. As he had not time to go through this subject, he designed, before that exercise was closed, to have preached two more, but was hindered by illness. When this work came to be printed, he was desired to add the sermons he purposed to have preached. Being a little revived, he transcribed the two first sermons towards the end of November, 1731. After that, he grew much worse than he had been: but his desire to finish this subject, carried him beyond what his strength might have been thought to have admitted. He purposed to insert in the remaining discourses some materials which he had by him: with great difficulty he transcribed the third discourse, which he sent me, with a letter, dated the 14th of December, which was as follows: "I have just finished, and now send you, my third sermon: I shall go on with the fourth, as fast as I can; if possible, I would finish it next week, but I fear I shall not be able, I have been so much worse, since I wrote to you last. I would desire you to take care of my poor copy, and use freedom in correcting what mistakes I may have been guilty of. It is no wonder to find such in my performances at any time, and especially now, so ill am I, and so often taken

off from my work by great pains. Pray for me, that I may have grace sufficient for me; and that whether I live or die, I may be the Lord's, and to the praise of his glorious grace." When I came to look over the discourse, I was amazed, that when unwieldiness of body had increased so much upon, and when he was under such a faint distemper as the dropsy, he should have vigour of mind to draw up such a performance; which, for vivacity and closeness of thought, strength of argument, and clearness of style, is not in the least inferior to any of his other works. It was very little above a fortnight after, that he rested from his labours; for on the thirty-first day of the above mentioned month, he sweetly slept in Jesus: so that it may be said, that he composed the sermon while he struggled with death, and that it contains some of the last thoughts of an eminent saint, who, in a few days after it was finished, began to ascribe, in the upper world, salvation, and power, and glory, to the Redeemer, the certain efficacy of whose death he so well defended. To him may be applied the following verses of Mr. Waller:

Wrestling with death, these lines he could indite;  
 No other theme could give his soul delight.  
 The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,  
 Lets in new light, thro' chinks that time has made:  
 Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,  
 As they draw near to their eternal home:  
 Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,  
 Who stand upon the threshold of the new.

He had begun to transcribe his fourth sermon; but illness increasing, he was soon forced to give over. He proposed, in the beginning of it, to consider the allegations of the friends of universal redemption, from a set of scriptures, which speak of Christ's dying for those that perish; but he only set down the following paragraphs, which were I believe, the last lines that came from his pen.

"Our opponents shrewdly argue, that if Christ died for them that perish, and for them that did not perish, then he died for all: but this is illogical and fallacious; for Christ might die for some that perish, and for all who are saved, and yet not die for all men. From a particular to an universal, the argument will not hold, by the rules of reason: if the premises are not universal, the conclusion cannot justly be so; but let us attend to the particular scriptures.

"The apostle Paul says, 'Through thy knowledge, shall thy weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?' 1 Cor. viii. 11. Our blessed Saviour affirmed, John x. 28, that 'his sheep hear his voice, and follow him, and that he gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of his hand.' If this is true, (and who will dare to be guilty of

such blasphemy, as to say it is not?) then either by the *weak brother*, in the former text, must be meant not one of Christ's real sheep, or else his perishing cannot be understood of eternal damnation: both the context, and the scripture forms of speech elsewhere, seem to favour this last sense; and therefore the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. 7, 12, explained this *causing him to perish*, by defiling and wounding his weak conscience, and making him offend."

I was unwilling this work should be imperfect; therefore, as I knew what papers he intended to transcribe, I have added his answers to some objections which he had not meddled with before: he gave me some directions about this several months ago, when he did not think he should be able to do any thing himself. I have not made any alterations, as indeed there was no need to make any, only I have ranged the heads in such a method as may answer the preceding part. I am not certain whether he would have added so large an application, but as it is not foreign to the subject, and is very well worth perusal, I have given it as I found it. Had these papers received the author's last hand, it is not to be questioned but that he would have made many useful additions to them; but, taking them in the condition in which they are, there is no manner of need to make any excuse for publishing them.

The worthy person, who is now entered into his Master's joy, used to call this head of divinity, which relates to the extent of Christ's redemption, one of his favourite subjects. He had well studied it, and he took pleasure to be upon it. When he was brought very low, and had the sentence of death within himself, he began the latter part of his undertaking with these remarkable words: "The death of Christ being the fountain of our life, there is nothing more necessary, pleasant, or useful to the Christian, than a right apprehension and remembrance of it." The delight which he took in the subject, carried him above his great pain and weakness. This was one of the great doctrines which he had preached, in the firm belief of which he died, and in which he found more sweetness, in his last sickness, than he had ever done. I confess, I have had a great deal of pleasure in perusing and revising these discourses for the press; and I heartily wish that they may be, by the divine blessing, made useful and beneficial to such as may read them, and may be of service to guard Christians against the absurd notion of universal redemption, the evident tendency of which is to represent Christ as dying in vain.

A. TAYLOR.

MARCH 1st, 1731-'32.

## OF PARTICULAR REDEMPTION.

### SERMON I.

TITUS ii. 14.—Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

THIS chapter begins with Paul's instructions to Titus, to speak the things which become sound doctrine, or to press on several ranks of persons such duties, as would adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, which doctrine is next specified in several important branches of it; such as the doctrine of salvation by grace, and of the celestial glory called the *blessed hope*; the doctrine of Christ's Deity, and second glorious coming to judgment; and the doctrine of our redemption by the death of Christ, with the end and design of it, ver. 11, 13, 14.

This last mentioned is the subject which falls to my share in this Lecture; which I shall the more cheerfully insist upon, because I find it to be one of those important points, with respect to which the apostle gave Titus a charge to "speak, and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority," ver. 15; as if he had said, Do thou declare these doctrines, and exhort the hearers to receive them; and rebuke, with all authority, or powerfully convince and reprove gainsayers, in such a manner, that none may despise thee.

The doctrine of our redemption by Christ, I take to be fully contained in the words of my text, "Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Before I come to discourse directly on this doctrine, I shall premise two things.

1. I shall consider the *extent* of Christ's redemption, or the persons to whom it belongs, as represented in my text.

2. I shall show the *weight and importance* of this doctrine.

- 1st, I am to consider the *extent* of this redemption, or the persons to whom it belongs, as represented in my text.

To state this right, we are to observe that the question is not whether there is an infinite merit and worth in Christ's redeeming blood: this both parties readily allow. Nor is it a matter in debate whether *many*, or only a *few* persons are redeemed by Christ, seeing they are said in Scripture, Rev. v. 9, to be "a great multitude that no man could number, of all nations, and

kindreds, and people, and tongues." But the true state of the question is this: Whether according to the will of the Father, and the intention of the Son, Christ died to reconcile and save all men, or a select chosen number only; the latter is what we affirm, and our opponents deny.

Let us now see how this matter is represented in my text, and which sentiment is approved and confirmed thereby. Christ "gave himself to redeem us," or, by an expiatory sacrifice, to deliver us from sin and misery, and make us eternally happy. "He redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. "He redeemed those that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons." The persons redeemed are more generally specified by the word *us*, which is a word often used, in Scripture, to signify the elect and believers; as where it is said, "God has not appointed *us* to wrath, but to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ, who died for us that we might live together with him," 1 Thess. v. 9, 10. The redeemed people are also represented, in my text, as those who, in due time, are *redeemed from all iniquity*, or from the guilt and power, and the very being of all sin; and also as purified to Christ, or really sanctified, and made holy, changed into his image, and fitted for fellowship and communion with himself. The redeemed are said to be a *peculiar people*; they are Christ's jewels, his treasure, distinguished from others in his intention, purchase, esteem, and care; they are a *chosen generation*, and therefore a *peculiar* or *purchased people*, 1 Pet. ii. 9; they are the travail of Christ's soul, the dear offspring of his blood, whom he loved, and therefore *gave himself for them*. The redeemed are also represented as persons *zealous of good works*, works of faith and love, and of repentance and new obedience; such works as have a divine life for the principle of them, a divine direction for their rule, even the revealed will of God, and a divine attainment for the end, that is, the glory of God. To be zealous of these good works, is to love them fervently, to perform them diligently, and to promote them with industry and vigour.

According to this account of the redeemed people, let us see whether we are to believe that Christ gave himself to redeem all men, or a select and peculiar number only. In my text, Christ is said to give himself *for us*, in our room and stead, to satisfy offended justice for all those whose iniquities were laid upon him, and for whom he died. Now, did Christ stand in the stead of all men? Did he satisfy divine justice for the sins of millions, who yet suffer the vengeance of eternal fire for the same sins themselves? Or did Christ make satisfaction for a peculiar number only, who shall never come into condemnation, but enjoy eternal life, as the purchase and fruit of his death?



When it is said that *Christ gave himself, that he might redeem to himself a peculiar people*, can the meaning be, that he died to render the salvation of all men possible? Or, is it not rather meant, that he died to render the salvation of a select number certain and perfect? Can we suppose that Christ died to render the salvation of all men possible, when multitudes were actually in hell, and so beyond any possibility of salvation, at the very time when Christ suffered? The reply made to this will be considered and confuted hereafter. Does not the Scripture speak of the effects and fruits of Christ's death, not as mere possibilities, but as things real and certain? "He shall see his seed, the travail of his soul," Isa. liii. 10, 11. Does not Christ say, that *he laid down his life for his sheep, that they should never perish, but he would give them eternal life?* John x. 28.

If Christ died to purchase to himself such as should be a *purified people, zealous of good works*, then surely he did not give himself to redeem all men, those who are never purified, as well as those that are: if he gave himself for a peculiar people, then not for all people; if for those who, in time, are made zealous of good works, then surely not for those who live and die enemies to good works, and zealous against them.

If Christ gave himself for a peculiar people, whom he valued as his *jewels and treasure, and who shall be his when he makes up his jewels*, then he did not give himself for all men; for all men are not his jewels and treasure, or peculiar people, Mal. iii. 16, seeing that in the day when he makes up his jewels, there shall be a manifest difference between his jewels and others, between the righteous and the wicked, those that fear God, and those that fear him not.

If these things are calmly and carefully considered, one would think that any impartial and understanding person may be able to determine whether Christ, in giving himself, did intend to redeem all men, or a chosen and peculiar number only: if the latter is the true sense of the text, as it appears to me, we might rest here, and seek no further evidence; for the Scriptures do not contradict themselves; the Spirit of truth cannot err or deceive us.

But it may here be objected, that the redemption by Christ is as extensive as the grace of the Father; but the grace of the Father appeared to all men, Tit. ii. 11, therefore the redemption of the Son extends to all men. Here we shall readily allow, that Christ redeemed all men, in as extensive a sense as the grace of God is said to have appeared to all men: for multitudes in the world, before the writing this epistle, at that time, and since, neither had, nor even now have, any discovery of this grace to them. The *all men*, then, to whom it appeared, must mean only *some* of all sorts; and so makes nothing for

the doctrine of universal grace, or universal redemption. In the context, the apostle had been speaking of the duties of aged men and women, of young men and young women, and of servants to their masters; to which he excited them, by the consideration of that grace which has appeared to all men, or to persons of all ranks and stations, and obliges them to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour: but what argument can be drawn from thence for universal redemption?

It may be said, the several parts of the text have been urged in favour of particular redemption; and it must be owned, that as to the event and effect, the redemption is not, cannot be universal, seeing all are not saved from sin, and purified; yet the purpose, design, and intention of Christ in giving himself, might extend to all men, though all men are not actually saved. To which I reply, that my text declares the purpose, design, and intention of Christ in giving himself, even to redeem from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people: Can this mean all men? Did Christ intend, in laying down his life, to sanctify and save all men? If so, then Christ is frustrated and disappointed of his end: how then does the *pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands*? How does he *see his seed, the travail of his soul*? or how does he *give eternal life to as many as the Father gave him*? If Christ's intention in giving himself was to redeem and save all men, and only some men are saved, how could it be said, *he shall be satisfied*? Isa. liii. 11. Could Christ be satisfied to have his intention disappointed, and his promise fail, when he said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me?" John xii. 32. Or what satisfaction could he take in seeing the Scripture broken, which says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged?" Isa. xlii. 4, or in seeing the will of the Father, that "he should lose nothing of all that were given him," frustrated and made void? Where does the Scripture speak of Christ's death, and the ends of it in terms of uncertainty, or represent him as coming short of his aim and intention, in dying for sinners? This does not appear to me to be a scripture doctrine, but an invention of men, framed to support an hypothesis, which they are fond of: but till some scripture evidence is brought to support it, we may justly reject it.—But I proceed to the next thing proposed.

2dly. I shall show the *weight and importance* of this doctrine relating to the extent of Christ's redemption.

It must be obvious, to every diligent inquirer into these things, how prone men generally are to run into extremes, in this, as well as in other things. Some look upon all inquiries of this nature as vain and useless; and others are so much taken up with them, as to neglect other weighty doctrines, or duties of the Christian religion. The conduct of each sort is blamable and carefully to be avoided. With what view and

design Christ laid down his precious life, is, whatever some think, a point of very great moment, with regard to the sense of many scriptures, the glory of Christ, and of the divine perfections, the encouragement of faith, and the comfort and establishment of believers, as may more fully appear hereafter. A clear decision of the controversy upon this head, must be allowed to be of very great service towards the removal of the heavy imputations with which the contending parties load each other's scheme, and to allay our heats, and remove our divisions, that we might "stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel," against the common enemy, who is sapping and subverting the very foundations of it.

A late writer,\* has had the confidence to tell the world, in print, that the training up his apostles was the work, or the main work that God had given Christ to do, and that it was his principal design, in giving up himself a sacrifice, that he might enable them by his death, and what would follow it, his resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Ghost, to preach with success, and spread his kingdom in the world: "What words," says our author, "can well raise our idea of the office of the apostles higher, than that Jesus lived and died, to prepare them for the due discharge of that trust?" We may add, what words can sink our idea of Christ's office lower, or cover the design of his death with more disgrace? If Christ's principal design in giving up himself a sacrifice, was to prepare the apostles for the true discharge of their work, we need not trouble ourselves about the general or special ends of his death, whether he gave himself to redeem all men or some only; nor much concern ourselves with what the apostle meant, by Christ's giving himself to redeem from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; seeing, according to our author, this was not Christ's principal end and intention, in dying to save men; but to set up the apostles above himself, and obtain a kingdom by their means. It is very strange that the apostle should forget all this dignity, to which Christ, by his death, had advanced him, and not say one word of it, in the account which he gives us of the end and design of Christ's death. Further, to what purpose are we told that Christ gave himself for us, to reconcile and bring us to God, that he purchased the church with his own blood, and obtained eternal redemption for us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood? How little reason had the church to adore and praise him for this, if the chief business of his life and death was to procure apostles, to preach the gospel, and advance his kingdom in the world?

Forasmuch then as things are come to this pass among us,

\* Lord Barrington, in his *Miscellanea Sacra*, Vol. II. p. 76, 77.

and the intention and design of Christ's death is not only mistaken by some, as to the number of the redeemed, but which is infinitely worse, seeing it is so openly and impiously perverted and denied by others, it is high time to make a strict inquiry into this matter, and, if possible, to find out and establish the true end and design of Christ's death, according to the scripture account thereof; and especially, seeing the sacred writings speak so much of it, and lay such a stress upon it, with regard to the glory of God, and the salvation of men. And it ought to be considered, whether the rendering the end of Christ's death so precarious to all, and the allowing, as some must do, the disappointment of his intention therein to so many, has not tempted many to run the desperate length of denying all its atoning virtue and salutary effects. If this is found to be true, of what importance must it be to understand and hold fast the true design and intention of Christ, in giving himself to redeem sinners? More, I think, need not be added, as to the importance of the point in hand; I shall therefore throw what I have to say upon it under two heads.

- I. I shall endeavour to establish and confirm the doctrine of particular redemption, in several distinct propositions; and shall make plain deductions from them.
- II. I shall answer the principal arguments, and vindicate the chief passages of Scripture produced in opposition thereto.

I. I shall *confirm* and *establish* the doctrine of *particular redemption*; or prove that Christ did not give himself to redeem all men, but to redeem and actually save, a chosen and peculiar number; this, which I take to be the truth, I shall endeavour to prove, under several distinct propositions.

1. The *Father's election*, and the *Son's redemption*, are of the same extent, or relate to the same individual persons, to all such, and to none else; all the chosen people are redeemed, and all the redeemed are chosen to salvation, "through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," 1 Pet. i. 2.

The life which Christ procured by his death, and which he applies by his Spirit, is by him bestowed on those very persons whom the Father had given him; he said of himself thus; "That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," John xvii. 2, which words are restrictive and plainly limited to the elect, whom the Father gave to Christ to redeem by his death; and thus election and redemption answer each other. Christ being made perfect, through sufferings, brings the many sons to glory, and presents them to the Father, saying, "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me," Heb. ii. 10, 13. Those given to Christ, and brought to glory by him, are those for whom he was made perfect through suf

ferings, so exact an agreement is there between the Father's choice, and the Son's purchase; they both pursue the same intention, and each person does his part to make the same individual persons happy. Hence it is said, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifies; who is he that condemns? it is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 33, 34. Seeing Christ died for the elect, and God the Father justifies those for whom Christ died, who shall condemn them whom the Father has chosen, and the Son has redeemed, by his most precious blood?

Christ has told us in express terms, that "he came down from heaven to do the will of him that sent him," which will he declared to be, "that of all which he had given him, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day," John vi. 38, 39. The resurrection here spoken of shows, that they are persons which the Father gave the Son to redeem, and preserve to eternal life; none of which given and redeemed persons can be lost, because it is the Father's will that they should not; and the Son came to fulfil that will, and has assured us, that all that the Father gives him shall come to him, and that he will cast out none of them, but raise up every believer at the last day, John vi. 37, 40. So exactly do the Father's election and the Son's redemption agree, with respect to the persons chosen and redeemed.

This also plainly appears, from those scripture passages, "According as he hath chosen us in him; in whom we have redemption through his blood," Eph. i. 4, 7. They are evidently the same persons who are first said to be chosen, and then to be redeemed by the blood of Christ; so exactly commensurate is the latter to the former. And we may observe, that there is not, here or elsewhere, the least intimation that Christ's redemption either exceeds or falls short of the Father's election, in one single instance, or individual person. All who were chosen are redeemed, and all who are redeemed in time were chosen from eternity.

The same truth is signified in that scripture, "That Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but also that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad," John xi. 51, 52; even the elect people, dispersed throughout the world. These Christ was to draw to himself, by the virtue of his death, according to his own words; "I, if I am lifted up (crucified) will draw all men to me," John xii. 32; all those who are the sons of God by election, or, to use the apostle's phrase, who are *predestinated to the adoption of children*, Eph. i. 5.

The truth of the proposition that the Father's election and the Son's redemption are of the same extent, or that Christ died for all chosen, and those only who were given to him by the

Father, I think, is fully proved by the scriptures alleged; the plain deduction and inference from which is, that Christ did not give himself to redeem all men, but a select number only.

2. Christ's redemption is *absolute, certain, and perfect*.

By its being absolute and certain, I mean, that Christ's redemption did not depend upon any previous desert in man; nor is the efficacy of it suspended upon the free will of man, so as it should be in his power to make it effectual, or ineffectual, as he pleases. This redemption is said to be perfect, with respect to the end or effect of it, that is, the perfect happiness of all the redeemed, who are freed from all sin, and all the penal consequences of it.

We have been often told, that Christ died *conditionally* for *all men*, but *absolutely* for *no man*; that he procured reconciliation and remission of sins for all men, and yet it might have so happened, as that not one person should have enjoyed either pardon or peace with God, seeing, as some say, Christ left it to men, to embrace or refuse the atonement, as they pleased. But Christ himself asserts, that *all that the Father gave him shall come to him*, John vi. 37. How low and mean a notion of redemption is it to say, that Christ made only a conditional purchase, and left it in the power of man to render it effectual, by believing, or to make it null and void by unbelief, as he would? How much this opinion tends to exalt the power and pride of the sinner, and to depreciate the love and redemption of Christ, one would think must be evident to every intelligent person at the first view. That without faith no man can enjoy eternal redemption is certain; but that Christ has left it to men to make void the ends of his death, and the intention of his redeeming love, as they please, is contrary to Scripture, and all good sense. Faith is not of a man's self, it is *the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8; but it is also the purchase of Christ's blood, and is certainly wrought in the hearts of the redeemed by the Holy Spirit, on the account of the Father's election and Christ's redemption, Titus i. 1; therefore it is styled "the faith of God's elect, obtained through the righteousness of God our Saviour," 2 Peter i. 1. Hence Christ said, that *his sheep shall hear his voice*, John x. 16. Christ spoke not doubtfully, but with certainty and resolution; he did not say, they shall hear my voice, if they will; if not, I submit my will and my work to their will and pleasure. As Christ died for men, without asking their previous consent, so he makes them *willing in the day of his power*, Psalm cx. 3; and renders his redemption certainly effectual to all those persons, and for all those ends, for which he gave himself. When it is said, that "Christ is entered into heaven for us, having obtained eternal redemption for us, by his blood," Heb. ix. 12, 24; can any thing less be meant, than that Christ, having made a perfect

and absolute purchase of salvation, by his death, ascended to heaven, to appear in the presence of God for the redeemed, and to secure their actual and eternal enjoyment of that salvation? If it be said, that Christ obtained redemption for all such as will have it, it must be granted; but then none will have it, but such as God makes willing, as he certainly does all his elect, and none else.

The Scriptures speak of the intention and effect of Christ's death, in the most absolute and certain terms: "When enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, and shall much more be saved by his life," Romans v. 10. "He died for us, that we should live together with him," 1 Thess. v. 10. "God hath appointed us to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ," verse 9; or actually to enjoy it. Whatever obstacles lay in the way, Christ undertook to remove; whatever is necessary to fit the redeemed for glory, he will see accomplished, and never leave his sheep, for whom he laid down his life, John x. 28; nor part with them out of his hand, but will bring them all safe to heaven; he has given us his word for it, that they shall never perish, but he will give them eternal life. Christ gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, absolutely, not conditionally, if we would; but he gave himself, with resolution to carry the work through, and make it effectual; this, I think, is plainly the sense of my text.

I cannot forbear digressing so far, as to observe what a glorious redemption this is, worthy of him that contrived it, and of him that procured it, and infinitely superior to that conditional redemption, which subjects the will and merits of Christ to the caprice and humour of sinners, and represents him as a well meaning, but weak Redeemer, who intended to save all men, but could not accomplish his design, by reason of men's not doing their part. According to our opponents, Christ's purchase respected his Father rather than men; it, as they say, procured God a right and power to save men on what conditions he pleased; so that when it is said, that God was reconciled, it is only meant that he was reconcilable, and Christ did not procure salvation, but only a salvability; he was but a titular Saviour, a Saviour without salvation, and a Redeemer without redemption: Christ is only the remote cause, but man the immediate cause; Christ the potential, but man the actual cause of his own redemption. Is this honourable to Christ?

If Christ died conditionally for all men, to save them, provided they would believe and repent, the question is, Whether he procured these conditions, repentance and faith, for all men; if not, how shall they come by them? If he did, why do not all receive them? seeing "Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins." If he does not give them, is it either for want of power, or for want

of will? How can he want power, who is "God over all, blessed for ever;" and, as Mediator, "has all power in heaven and earth committed to him?" And if it proceeds from a want of will in Christ, that they do not receive them, how then did he intentionally redeem all men, if he withholds the conditions upon which it is suspended? If it is said, it was not agreed between the Father and the Son that these conditions should be bestowed on all men, then it was because it was not the intention of the Father and the Son, that they should receive them, and so be saved; and if it is so, then neither Father nor Son really intended that all men should be redeemed and saved; for who has resisted their will? Whatever they intended to do shall be done. The matter is not left at uncertainties; Christ's redemption is absolute, certain, and perfect; and hence it follows, that Christ did not die to redeem all men, seeing all men do not enjoy an absolute, certain, and perfect redemption.

3. Christ's *suretiship* and *sufferings* are of the *same extent*; Christ died to redeem all, and only those, whose debt he, as their surety, undertook to pay.

Christ is expressly said to be the Surety of a better testament, or covenant, Heb. vii. 22. But the question is, whether Christ is only a Surety on God's part to us, as some affirm, or a surety on our part to God, as others assert? When God said, "sacrifice and offering he would not;" or when he declared, that he would not accept the legal sacrifices, as an atonement for the sins of men, then Christ said, "Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God," Psal. xl. 8: i. e. I put myself in the place of thy chosen people; and, according to thy will, I will suffer in their stead, be a sacrifice for their sins, pay their debt, and redeem them from death. For this end, "God laid upon him the iniquity of us all; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 6. What other reason can be given why our sins should be laid and punished upon Christ? or, why we should be healed by his stripes, but his suretiship, or standing in our place, room, and stead, and so suffering the just for the unjust, or giving his life a ransom for many? On this account, we find God the Father restipulating to Christ that he should "see his seed, the travail of his soul, and should be satisfied," verse 11. There was an exact agreement between Christ's payment and purchase, between the price he paid, and the persons he redeemed; he paid the full debt of all, for whom he was Surety, and he secures the eternal redemption of every one, for whom he made the payment. We could neither pay the debt which we had contracted, nor purchase the inheritance which we had forfeited, nor claim the promises which are *yea and amen, only in Christ*. It is therefore by means of his death, in our room and stead, that



we "receive the promise of the eternal inheritance," Heb. ix. 15.

The grand question here is, For whom was Christ surety, whose debt did he pay, whose freedom did he procure? Let the event declare this; for certainly Christ did not die in vain, or purchase deliverance, and yet lose the price he paid, nor any part of the purchase he made; for that would be contrary to all the rules of justice and righteousness. Who then are they that are delivered from the wrath to come, and shall inherit everlasting life? Is this the lot of all men, or of some only? If of some only, as matter of fact proves, then Christ was not the Surety of all men; he did not die to redeem all men, but some only. If Christ had been Surety of the covenant for all men, and had purchased grace and salvation for all men, then all men should certainly enjoy them, Psal. lxxxix. 33, 34; for God could not break his covenant, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.

If it is said, that Christ died to procure and establish a covenant of grace with all mankind, and that every man is born under this covenant, and that the works of nature reveal this covenant to all men, and call all men into it; I answer, that the Scriptures no where speak of such an universal covenant of grace, procured by Christ, or made with men. If there was such a covenant subsisting, surely it should have been revealed and made known to all men; but multitudes of persons, yea nations, never had the knowledge of this covenant. God, at first, made a distinction between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, which has been kept up ever since. Gen. iii. 15. The covenant was established with Abel, and Cain was rejected; Abel being slain, Seth was raised up, as the seed of the covenant; after him, Noah and his family were taken into covenant with God, and the old world rejected and destroyed: after that, God established his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whilst Ishmael and Esau were excluded. And the Jews were God's covenant people; but the rest of the nations were suffered to walk in their own ways. And, to this day, there are great numbers, not only of persons, but of nations, who never heard of Christ, or the covenant of grace, and are they yet in or under this covenant? "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" Rom. x. 14. The works of nature, indeed, teach men many things concerning God, as a Creator, but not as a Redeemer: they discover his being, power, wisdom, goodness, and providence; but not his saving grace and good pleasure in Christ, nor Christ's merit, intercession or government; nor can they instruct men in the nature of the covenant established upon those better promises, in the hands of a Mediator, Heb. viii. 6, or discover to them the perpetuity of those promises, which are yea and amen in

Christ Jesus, or that eternal life comprised in the covenant, but given only in and through the Son of God. These things were hid from ages and generations, who cannot therefore be supposed, by the works of nature, to be called into the covenant of grace. Moreover, if all men are brought under a covenant of grace, how could the apostle speak of some "still under the law, and under the curse," Gal. iii. 10, "children of wrath, and strangers to the covenant of promise, without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 3, 12, especially if Christ was the surety of an universal covenant?

If Christ is the surety of a covenant, which, though it includes an innumerable company, yet not all men, then he is not the surety of all men, and consequently did not die to redeem all men; for on what grounds can it be said that he died for any more, or others, than those for whom he is surety? How could he be required to die, and satisfy divine justice for any men, otherwise than as he had voluntarily put himself in their room, and had undertaken to satisfy the demands of the law and justice of God on their behalf? If Christ was the surety of an universal covenant, then he paid the debts of all men, made satisfaction for the sins of all men, otherwise he would not have fulfilled his trust, nor have been faithful either to God or man. And if he did satisfy for the sins of all men, then, in justice all men must be exempted from suffering for them, and so hell is dispeopled at once, or else a double satisfaction would be required for the same sins, which is as contrary to God's justice, as to have none at all. Upon the whole, seeing multitudes suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, for their own sins, it is evident, that Christ was not the surety of an universal covenant of grace, was not the surety of all men: and hence the conclusion clearly and strongly follows, that he did not give himself to redeem all men.

4. Christ's *oblation* and *intercession* relate to the same persons.

"He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors;" Isa. liii. 12. For what transgressors? for those whose sins he bore. To offer for the sins of the people, and to pray for them, were the two main parts of the priestly office, under the law, and of Christ's priestly office, as it is represented under the gospel. "It is Christ that died, who also makes intercession for us;" Rom. viii. 34. And again, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who also is the propitiation for our sins;" 1 John ii. 1, 2. The one answers the other: the intercession is founded upon the propitiation. There is no reason to think that Christ died for those for whom he would not intercede, or that he interceded for any for whom he did not die; the Scriptures apply both to the same persons, or speak of them as done both for the same persons.

There are some for whom we are *not to pray*, 1 John v. 16; and can we think that Christ prayed for them himself? What is Christ's intercession, but a presenting to the Father that sacrifice which he had offered for the sins of men, with a desire that they may enjoy the blessings purchased thereby? Christ has told us, "That he did not pray for the world," John xvii. 9. therefore he did not die for the world, as the word is taken, for all men; for if he had offered the sacrifice for all, it would bear a plea for all; and we cannot conceive that Christ should refuse to intercede for any, whom he loved so well as to bleed and die for them. If it is said, that Christ foresaw the unworthiness of the wicked world, and therefore resolved not to pray for them, it may be also said, that he foresaw the unworthiness of the wicked world, and therefore would not die for them; for what reason can be given why that wickedness and unworthiness, which is supposed to hinder Christ's praying for them, should not also hinder his dying for them?

But it may be said, Christ prayed for those that crucified him: he prayed for Jerusalem, and therefore doth not limit his intercession to the elect. I answer, that those for whom Christ prayed on the cross, were afterwards converted, and so appeared to be of the number of God's chosen; and it cannot thence be proved that he prayed for the forgiveness of all men: if he did or does, one of those two absurdities will follow, either that the Father does not *always hear Christ*, John xi. 42, or that all men shall be forgiven; both which are contrary to Scripture. As to Jerusalem, Christ's words relating thereto, are not properly a prayer, but rather an act of human compassion towards the miserable. It is not to be thought that Christ would pray for what he knew could not be granted,\* and he expressly says, "That the things of their peace were now hid from their eyes," Luke ix. 42. Besides, it might be their civil, not their eternal peace, which is spoken of; and then no argument can thence be drawn for Christ praying for the eternal salvation of any besides those given him of the Father.

If then it holds true that Christ intercedes only for those given him out of the world, and if he intercedes for all for whom he died, then he did not die for all men, seeing all men were not given to him by the Father; and he does not intercede for all men, not for the world, but for a peculiar number given him out of the world. A part given him out of the world cannot mean the whole world; neither can the words of Christ, "I pray not for the world," John xvii. 9, 20, be restrained to the apos-

\* Or, as some think, Christ refers to his prophetic office in these words, "O that thou hadst known at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; and how often would I have gathered thee," viz. the tendency of my ministry was to show the way of life and peace, but ye refused instruction.—*Collat. Piscat. cum Vorstio*, pp. 2, 94.

ties, because in the same prayer he says, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on me, through their word." Christ's prayer then extends to all such, as in time believe, and to none else: and therefore so does his death, seeing, as has been proved, his oblation and intercession relate to the same persons.

5. Christ did not die to procure the remission of *their* sins, whose sins he knew beforehand were irremissible; for that would have been, so far, to have died in vain. It would not have been to have done his Father's will, but to have acted in direct opposition to it, in purchasing remission for those whose sins can never be forgiven. "The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven to men," Mat. xii. 31. This Christ declared with his own mouth; and did he, after such a declaration, die to procure the pardon of their sins, who can never be forgiven? Far be it from us to impute such a weakness and absurdity to the only wise God our Saviour. Does Christ forbid us to pray for the pardon of that sin, 1 John v. 16, and yet did he shed his blood to procure the pardon of those that were guilty of it? And if he did not die for them, then he did not die for all men.

It will, I suppose, be generally allowed, that the sins of those actually in hell, are irremissible, for "there the fire is never quenched, and the worm dieth not," Mark ix. 43, 44, and out of that place there is no redemption. At the very time when Christ suffered, there were multitudes in that place of torment; and how absurd is it to suppose that Christ paid the price of redemption for millions, who at that very instant were suffering the vengeance of eternal fire for their own sins? If it is said, is it not as absurd for Christ to pay the price of their redemption, who were actually in heaven at the time of payment, and so stood in no need of it? To this we may reply, that those who were in heaven when Christ died, were admitted on the credit of that purchase which he had undertaken to make for them: but Christ could not die for the damned, upon any supposition of their deliverance and salvation, or by virtue of any engagement, on his part, to deliver them. But it may be urged, that Christ was to pay the price of the day and means of grace, and a possibility of their salvation; and this was as much due to God for those in hell, as for any out of it. To this I answer distinctly, that it no where appears in Scripture, that Christ stood engaged to purchase a day, and means of grace, and possibility of salvation for all men; and if so, the reason of his suffering for those in hell ceaseth. Besides, it is plain that many of the damned did never enjoy a day and means of grace; for God neglected and overlooked them, and suffered them to walk in their own ways, Acts xvii. 30. They lived without God in the world. The gospel was hid from them, and by all

their natural or acquired wisdom they knew not God, 1 Cor. i. 21. What price could Christ have to pay for such? was he to pay for what they never had? In short, Christ could not engage to procure a possibility of salvation for such as could not possibly be saved, as Cain and Judas, and such as committed the sin against the Holy Ghost: and therefore he could not die to render salvation possible to all men.

The deduction from the whole is, that Christ did not intend, by his death, to reconcile and save all men, or to render the salvation of all men possible; seeing he well knew, that the salvation of some men was, when he died, impossible; and that they never had enjoyed a day or means of grace or salvation, nor had he undertaken to purchase it for them.

6. Those for whom Christ died, are *exempted from condemnation*, and shall at last be presented to God with exceeding joy.

The apostle Paul puts this question, "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 34. This is spoken indefinitely, and belongs to all for whom Christ died; for the apostle puts no guard or limitation upon it. Through Christ's blood "there is redemption, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace," Eph. i. 7. But if multitudes, for whom Christ's blood was shed, never enjoy that forgiveness, then it is not according to the riches of grace, nor indeed according to the strict rules of justice. If any, and especially if the greater part of those for whom Christ died, are, notwithstanding, eternally condemned, how weak must the apostle's reasoning be, and how groundless and vain his challenge? "Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 34. On the other hand, if Christ's death exempts all men from condemnation, for whom he died, then his reasoning is just and strong, but then it will thence follow that he did not die for all men; seeing so many are eternally condemned.

Christ shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied, and shall hereafter present the redeemed to the Father, with exceeding joy: saying, "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me," Heb. ii. 13. Now, if Christ gave himself for all, and only a remnant are saved, what satisfaction, what joy, can he have, in presenting them to his Father? Instead of saying, "Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me, the whole world redeemed by my blood;" may we not rather apprehend him saying, "Behold, here is a handful, a small part of those whom I died to redeem; the rest are lost, though it was, O Father, thy will and my intention to save them all, yet their will prevailed against thine and mine, and my blood was shed for the greater number in vain." Could this be agreeable to Christ? would this be his "seeing the travail of his soul, and being satisfied?" what joy could attend the presenting a small part of

the redeemed to the Father? But if all for whom Christ died safely arrive in glory, then Christ may be abundantly satisfied, and joy may run through the whole celestial court. It will be a joy to the Father who chose them, to the Son who redeemed them, to the Holy Spirit who fitted them for heaven, to the holy angels who ministered to them, and to the saved themselves, that they are all there; not one lost or missing: and this according to the Scriptures, will be the real event and true state of the case.

The plain deduction or inference from these premises, is this; that Christ did not intend, by his death, to redeem all men; for then he could not with so much joy present to the Father only a part of them, as the travail of his soul, or purchase of his blood.

The rest of the propositions to be laid down and confirmed, I must refer to my next discourse; and I shall now conclude with this one short reflection upon the whole: that the doctrine which tends most to debase man and exalt Christ, to take away boasting from us, and to set forth the glory of God, that is the true doctrine of Christ's redemption: for to this end is he made redemption to us, "That he that glories, may glory in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 31.

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## SERMON II.

**TITUS ii. 14.**—Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

THE gospel doctrine of our redemption by Christ, tends much to the glory of God, and the happiness of man; it is the admiration of angels, and the envy of devils. Satan, provoked to the last degree, to see man delivered out of his kingdom of darkness and misery, has left no means unattempted, to render that redemption ineffectual, as to the application of it, the purchase of which he could not prevent: for this end he has raised up some to deny the deity of the Redeemer, and to place him in the rank of mere creatures, that so they might make void his merit and satisfaction; and so, at one blow, destroy all real redemption by Christ, pluck the crown from his head, and lay our hopes of happiness expiring with the merit and honour of the Saviour. Others, who do not deny Christ's merit and satisfaction, preclude themselves from the benefit thereof, by setting up a depraved and false medium of application instead of the true one: and here Satan has put men upon running into two dangerous extremes; some place faith in a persuasion of the love of Christ,

and of their interest in redemption by him: others rest in that faith, which only receives Christ as the true Messiah, or the Saviour that was to come into the world: and thus the devils believe, and yet tremble at the thoughts of their future doom. There is a third sort, with whom is my present concern, who, in extending Christ's redemption to all men, represent it as precarious and uncertain to all, and certainly ineffectual to the greater part of mankind, seeing such multitudes fall short of personal redemption and salvation. I might mention a fourth sort, who from the doctrine of universal redemption, draw a confident, though groundless conclusion, that they shall be saved whatever their faith or practice be, forgetting or denying my text, which asserts, that "Christ gave himself to redeem from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" and that therefore such as allow themselves in evil works, indulge iniquity, and are not purified, have no claim to redemption by Christ. By what has been said it appears, how Satan has been endeavouring to subvert our redemption, by his attempts upon the author of it, Christ; the instrument of its application, faith; and by misleading us, as to the object or extent of it. It concerns us therefore to be sober and vigilant, lest our great adversary prevail against us, in any of the forementioned methods, to be injurious to the Redeemer and to our own souls.

To establish, what I take to be, the true doctrine of redemption, That Christ gave himself to redeem and save a chosen and peculiar number only, several arguments were formerly offered; it was proved, that election and redemption are of the same extent, or do relate to the same individual persons; and that therefore, seeing all are not chosen, all are not redeemed. Christ's redemption is absolute and certain; he cannot fail nor miss of the end and design of his death; and therefore the end and design of it was not to redeem and save all men, seeing all men are not redeemed and saved. Christ's suretiship and sufferings are of the same extent; the former being the ground of the latter; but Christ is not the surety of all men; and therefore he did not suffer and die for all men. The oblation and intercession of Christ relate to the same persons; seeing that he does not intercede for all men, he did not die for all men. Nor is it to be supposed that Christ died to procure the remission of their sins, whose sins were irremissible; such as the sins of the damned, and the sin against the Holy Ghost; therefore he did not die for all men: he did not die to procure remission for those actually in hell at the time of his death, or for those on earth concerning whom his own lips had declared that they should never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. I further argued, that the redeemed are exempted from condemnation; and shall be presented to God with exceeding joy; but all men are not exempted from condemnation; nor shall all men

be presented to God with exceeding joy: therefore Christ did not give himself to redeem all men, but a select and chosen number only. These things were more largely insisted on in my preceding discourse, under six distinct propositions: I now proceed to a seventh.

7. There is a strict and inviolable connexion between *Christ's sufferings* and his *saving benefits*. All those for whom Christ died, shall be saved by his death; every person shall enjoy eternal redemption, for whom Christ obtained it.

As God gives, so Christ purchased grace and glory, for all the redeemed; therefore, "if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 10. Christ will perfect his work; and the same persons who were reconciled by his death, shall be brought to eternal salvation by his life. His intercession in heaven secures the eternal salvation of all those for whom he gave himself an atoning sacrifice, to reconcile them to God. The purchase and application of redemption are of the same extent.

Our opponents, directly contrary to the cited scripture, teach, that multitudes of those who were reconciled to God by Christ's death, yet shall not, or will not be saved by his life. What then becomes of the apostle's argument for the certainty of men's salvation, drawn from Christ's dying for them, if many for whom he died may, and must come short of salvation? if when Christ had reconciled them by his death, they shall not certainly be saved by his life? "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, much more (says the apostle, much less, say our opponents) shall we be saved by his life." If Christ paid the price of redemption when we were enemies, and propitiated God, much more God being propitiated, and a sufficient price of our redemption being paid, shall our eternal salvation be secured by Christ's life in heaven, where he appears, in the presence of God for us, and pleads the merits of his death for their salvation, whom he reconciled to God thereby. He is too wise, and too kind to those who were the travail of his soul, to lose any of them. Hence he said, "Father, I will (I claim it as my due) that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory," John xvii. 24.

Would any wise man pay down a valuable consideration for that which he had no assurance he should enjoy, or rather, which he knew beforehand he should never enjoy? But so it seems Christ, the wisdom of the Father, must be supposed to do, rather than infringe upon free will, and man's sovereign power in his own salvation. However, according to the Scriptures, Christ did not die in vain; there is a certain connexion between reconciliation and salvation; Christ's chastisement,



and their peace for whom he suffered; his stripes, and their healing for whom he was wounded, are inseparably joined together. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 5, said the prophet. But according to our opponents, our peace and healing do not certainly follow Christ's chastisements and stripes. Now, whether God or man is to be believed, let every one who is impartial judge. It is further written, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities," ver. 11. Such are justified by Christ, whose iniquities he bore; that is, suffered and satisfied for in his death: to this agree those words of the apostle, "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. What a strict connexion is there all along, between Christ's sufferings, and his saving benefits; and how are the same persons pointed out, as enjoying the salutary effects of Christ's death, for whom he suffered it!

The apostle argues, that "he who spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, shall with him freely give us all things," Rom. viii. 32. That is, all such for whom Christ died, shall enjoy all the saving benefits and fruits of his death, such as effectual calling, justification, and eternal glory, before-mentioned. God having given up his Son to die for us, will with him give us freely the means of grace, grace itself, and the heavenly glory, ver. 30. For that love to our persons which inclined God to give his own Son, the Son of himself, of his own nature, will also dispose him to give all inferior blessings for a double reason; partly because this Son was too great and precious a gift to be lost or given for nothing, to be given to such sufferings as he endured, and yet lose millions of souls redeemed by his blood; and also because justice required, that when the Son had paid the price of redemption, he should enjoy the purchase, or things purchased, even those for whom God gave him up: and in order thereto, God will give them all things necessary to their salvation.\* The argument from the cited scripture lies thus; If God, having given up his Son to die for us, will with him freely give us grace and glory, then there is an inseparable connexion between Christ's sufferings, and his saving benefits: but God freely, and without any condition gave us Christ, and with him all things; therefore there is an inseparable connexion between Christ's sufferings,

\* One of the ancients upon these words thus expresses himself. "He excepts nothing who is the author of all; art thou afraid of thy Judge? consider who he is, namely, Christ, to whom the Father has committed all judgment. Can he damn thee, who redeemed thee by his death, for whom he offered himself, and whose life he knows to be the reward of his death? will he not say, What profit is there in my blood, if I condemn him whom I have died to save?"—Ambrose, lib. 1. de Jacob et vita beata. cap. 6.

and his saving benefits, between his being given up for us, and the giving of all things (grace and glory purchased by Christ) to all those for whom he died.

All the parts of the argument Christ himself has given us in one discourse, leaving it to us to put them together. Christ first described the persons for whom he died, in these words: "I lay down my life for the sheep." John x. 15. He next declared the certain effect of his laying down his life for them; "they hear his voice and follow him," verse 27. And then he draws the conclusion, "I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Those for whom Christ laid down his life, in time hear his voice, and follow him, and shall enjoy eternal life, as the fruit and purchase of his death for them. And thus from Christ's own words, the truth of our proposition appears; that there is an inviolable connexion between Christ's sufferings and his saving benefits, and that all those for whom Christ died, shall certainly be saved.

This truth may be confirmed by other Scripture testimonies; as for instance, from what is said of Christ, that "he died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him." This was Christ's intention and design, that all those for whom he died should live with him in glory: either then Christ must be disappointed, or else they must for ever live with him for whom he died. Christ gave his "flesh for the life of the world," John vi. 51, and he giveth life to the same world, verse 33. The purchase, and the application of salvation are spoken of, with the same certainty, and in the same extent: there is not the least intimation that he purchased salvation for all, but applies it only to some; the same world for whom he died, to that world he gives life; but he does not give life to *all* men; therefore by the *world*, Christ did not mean all men, but all those throughout the world who believe on him, for whom he gave his flesh, to purchase their life.

We are assured, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; for he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. Here we may observe, that those whom God reconciles to himself, are those to whom God does not impute trespasses; those to whom God does not impute their trespasses, are those for whom Christ was made sin, are those who are made the righteousness of God in him: therefore, the non-imputation of sin, and the imputation of righteousness, belong to all those, and only those for whom Christ was made sin, and whom God was in him reconciling to himself.

We are told that Christ, "by his own blood, entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. ix. 12, 14, 15; that his blood purges our consciences from

dead works; and that by means of his death, they which are called receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. If Christ's death obtained redemption, if it purges the conscience, and secures the eternal inheritance, then there is a strict connexion between Christ's sufferings and his saving benefits; but the former is true, and therefore so is the latter. Christ's death is not as a medicine laid up in a box, for such as may happen to make use of it; but it is effectually and certainly applied to all for whom it was prepared: "By his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 5; "all that the Father hath given me shall come," saith Christ, John vi. 7. If he obtained eternal redemption for us, then all those for whom he obtained it, do and shall enjoy that redemption; otherwise it is so far from being eternal redemption, that it is no redemption at all.

If it be said, that Christ obtained eternal redemption for all, conditionally but not absolutely; the question is, whether Christ purchased this condition for them or not; if he did, then they must certainly enjoy it; if he did not purchase this condition, how did he obtain eternal redemption for them? Or how shall they come by this condition; as for instance, faith, seeing that is not of a man's self, Eph. ii. 8; nor is this way of enjoying this redemption, or the redemption itself, so much as revealed, and made known to multitudes of men; "and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Rom. x. 14. Remission of sins is so great a part of redemption, that it is put for the whole of it, when it is said, "In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Eph. i. 7. The latter, forgiveness of sins through Christ's blood, is here meant, by our being redeemed by his blood. If then we have the forgiveness of sins included in, or flowing from redemption by Christ's blood, then all those who were redeemed by his blood, have also forgiveness of sins, and consequently either all are pardoned, or all were not redeemed, seeing redemption necessarily includes forgiveness, or there is an inviolable connexion between them; which is the assertion I am proving. If this is disallowed, how shall we secure the honour of God's wisdom, the sincerity of his love, or maintain the value of Christ's death, or God's equity and righteousness? Was Christ's blood shed for all men, and yet are only some saved? Could Christ die at uncertainty, whether he should have a seed or no, or how great or small it should be, or whether the divine love should enjoy all, or half, or a fourth part of its objects, as it must be, if it depends on the free and uncertain will of man, whether the redeemed shall be actually saved or not? "God sent forth his Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons:" this, in the purchase of it, we received in Christ's death, and therefore we are said to be sons, before conversion; "Because ye are sons,

God has sent forth the Spirit into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 4—6. The application answers the purchase, and actually follows upon it. Christ redeemed those for whom he died from bondage, and procured for them the glorious privilege of being the sons of God; and being thus made sons, as the price paid for it, the Father grants the thing purchased, and bestows the Spirit of adoption on the redeemed people. Now, do all enjoy this Spirit of adoption? Can all men cry, Abba, Father, or go to God with a filial frame, under the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit? If not, as is most true, then Christ did not die for all men, to redeem them from the curse, and make them sons, seeing there is such an inseparable union between redemption and adoption.

Because this argument is so conclusive and decisive, let us enter a little deeper into it, and more firmly establish it, by showing the grounds and reasons of this strict connexion between Christ's sufferings and his saving benefits.

(1.) Christ's death had in it the nature of a *price* of redemption. We are told, in Scripture, that "we are bought with a price," 1 Cor. vi. 20; and what that price was, we elsewhere read, when mention is made of the church of God, which he "purchased with his own blood," Acts xx. 28, and when it is declared that we were not "redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. It is the blood of Christ, which in this business has that use, which silver and gold has in the redeeming of captives, as one\* has observed. It is called, in Scripture, a price of redemption for the delivery of another. Now, if Christ paid a price of redemption for all, then, according to the rules of justice, all must be delivered, otherwise Christ had not his due: if, then, all are not delivered, Christ did not pay this price of redemption for all men, seeing all for whom he paid the price do and must enjoy the thing purchased. He who is righteous in all his ways, cannot be unrighteous to his own Son, in withholding what he had bought with his precious blood.

(2.) That *love* which caused God to give his Son, and which caused Christ to give himself to redeem sinners, cannot lose or be deprived of vast numbers of persons, on whom it had fixed, and for whom it gave a ransom, and therefore all the redeemed must be saved; and if all were redeemed, then all must be saved, for God will not lose the objects of his love.

But it may be objected, the consequence drawn from the divine love doth not follow, seeing God and Christ loved all men, and intended their salvation only conditionally, provided they would believe, but left that to themselves, as being in their own power. I answer: then God and Christ left it in the power

\* Dr. Owen against Biddle, p. 464.

of their enemies, whether they should have any objects of their love or not; for as many never do or will believe, so the rest might not have done it, and then both Father and Son had loved in vain, and Christ had died in vain; and, according to the objectors, God is brought down to a mean dependence upon his creatures, unworthy of his sovereign power and grace; and God's satisfaction and honour are put into the power or subjected to the pleasure of foolish and disobedient men, Titus iii. 3. But if God had such a love to all men, why did he not keep their salvation in his own hands, and secure it to them all? Could not the same love which gave Christ for all, have secured the happiness of all men, if indeed it did give him for all, and would act like itself, or according to this large extent of its objects? But, moreover, where does the Scripture represent the love of God as conditional? Is it not said to be free, and from everlasting, and the spring of all the good that is wrought in or done to men? They are "saved and called, not according to their own works, as previous conditions, but according to God's purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus, before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9, which is very contrary to that conditional love, mentioned in the objection.

(3.) The *Father's* love to Christ renders it necessary that all such should enjoy salvation, for whom Christ, by his death, procured it. Would not a kind father, among men, certainly give to his child what he had lawfully and fully purchased? and shall not the great God give to his Son all the travail of his soul, all the purchase of his blood? Did Christ so love multitudes as to satisfy the justice of God for their sins, and obtain eternal glory for them? and shall his Father, who loves his Son, and gives all things into his hands, John iii. 35, permit his loss of a great part of the travail of his soul, and the purchase of his blood, as it actually comes to pass, if Christ loved and died for all men, and yet so great a number of them perish? How can this be consistent with the Father's love to Christ, any more than it is with Christ's love towards those for whom he died? Such a failure and loss seems to argue a great defect in the love of God to his Son, as well as a want of it to men; and carries in it an appearance of feebleness, dependence, and changeableness, no ways becoming the perfections of the great God, particularly his sovereignty, power, and infinite love, so much celebrated in Scripture, and admired by the saints in all ages.

Upon the aforesaid grounds, with others that might have been mentioned, it appears that there is a strict connexion between Christ's sufferings and his saving benefits; or that it is reasonable to believe that all those who were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, shall certainly be saved by his

life. And from this proposition, thus established, the inference is very plain and strong, that Christ did not suffer and die to redeem all men, but a peculiar number only, who shall certainly be saved.

8. Christ died only for them for whom he purchased all the *means necessary* to their *enjoyment of salvation*; particularly faith and repentance, and the Holy Spirit, the Author of each of them.

Some may wonder to hear of the purchase of the Spirit, who is a free Spirit, and works all things according to his own will; and it may be thought that he is not therefore to be bought any more than Christ was. But whatever some may think, the mission, and the work of the Holy Spirit are, in Scripture, spoken of as the fruit and effects of Christ's death; as when he said, "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him to you; and, when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment," John xvi. 7, 8. By *going away*, and *departing*, Christ meant his death, with what followed it: this death was necessary to the coming of the Spirit, to convince and convert sinners, and to comfort believers. The case stood thus: all men by nature were under the law, and under the curse, in a state of sin and misery, by reason of sin: the first covenant had in it no promise, either of repentance or pardon, or of the Holy Spirit, to work the one, or apply the other, being made with a perfect man, who needed none of them; and fallen man could not receive these fruits of divine love, but by virtue of the new covenant, which was to be confirmed by the blood of Christ, which blood also purchased all the saving blessings of it, satisfied justice, removed the curse, and procured eternal life for the redeemed, and all that was previously necessary to the enjoyment of it. The church was purchased by the blood of Christ, and is made a church by the Holy Spirit, Acts xx. 28, who, according to the order and method of salvation, is engaged to renew and fit for heaven all, and only those, whom Christ, by his blood, redeemed from misery, and entitled to glory. Accordingly we read that Christ redeemed them that were under the law, by being made under the law for them, or by enduring its curse and penalty, in his death: which also procured the adoption of children for us, and the Holy Spirit to work a filial disposition in us. God sent his Son to redeem us; and, by virtue of that redemption, his Spirit, to renew us, Gal. iv. 6. We receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, chap. iii. 14. The ministration of the Spirit belonged not to the law, but to the gospel, which is called faith. Christ, by his accursed death, redeemed his people from the curse, and procured the promised Spirit, the attendant of the gospel dispensation, verse

13. On this account the apostle asks, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. iii. 2. It is by virtue of the gospel covenant, ratified by the blood of Christ, that the promise of the Spirit, or the promised Spirit, is received. "If," as one observes, "the blood of Christ had not been shed on the cross, the Spirit had not been poured out from heaven; the effusion of the one was the cause of the effusion of the other." And as we obtain the Spirit, so we obtain faith through Christ, for his sake, or on account of his purchase of it. Faith is obtained through the righteousness of God our Saviour, 1 Pet. i. 1: it is on the behalf, or for the sake of Christ, that it is given to men to believe, Phil. i. 29. This gift was procured by the blood of Christ, who therefore is called the "author and finisher of our faith," Heb. xiii. 2. If Christ is the author of our faith, he must be the purchaser of it; for he gives nothing to us but what, by his merits, he purchased for us. Christ, by his death, having procured all spiritual blessings for his people, and repentance among the rest, is exalted to give it; he is a "Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins," Acts v. 31. These both flow from him as a Saviour, and therefore as a sufferer, as one that purchased them by his precious blood; and we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus, Heb. x. 11.

It is on all hands agreed, that without faith and repentance men cannot be saved: but whence do these flow, and how do they come by them? Either men have a natural power to repent and believe, or else faith and repentance are, as the scriptures speak, the purchase and the gifts of Christ; if they are the purchase and gifts of Christ, then Christ, by his death, did not purchase salvation conditionally, if men of themselves, or by their own power, would repent and believe. He purchased salvation absolutely and perfectly, and all the necessary means of it, so that men shall repent and shall believe: and if this is true, then the conditional salvation, which some assert, is a mere fallacy, and the redemption of all men by the death of Christ is not true, seeing all men do not receive from Christ the gifts of faith and repentance, as they should do, if he had purchased them for all men.

Our opponents,\* indeed, deny that Christ, by his death, procured faith and repentance; in maintenance of which opinion they allege the following reasons.

(1.) They urge, that Christ wanted neither power nor will to work them in the hearts of men; to which I answer, that it might as well have been said, that Christ did not obtain eternal redemption for us, seeing he wanted neither power nor will to

\*Dr. Whitby on the Five Points.

redeem us. The power and will of Christ, in this matter, are to be considered as acting according to the economy,\* and the method of salvation agreed upon between the divine Persons. Christ says, that he could do nothing of himself, chap. v. 30; that is, beside, or beyond, or contrary to the will of the Father: now it evidently was the will of the Father, that in "bringing many sons to glory, the Captain of our salvation should be made perfect through sufferings," and that by the effusion of his blood, he should obtain for us eternal redemption, and therefore, all things included in it.

(2.) It is alleged, that to make Christ procure both the promise and condition, by the same act and passion, is to turn the conditional covenant into one that is absolute; I answer, if that turn makes it conformable to God's covenant, it is so much the better. God says, "This is the covenant that I will make; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: all shall know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. viii. 10, 12. Let our opponents tell us, where we shall, in this account, find the condition of the covenant, on man's part. Supposing some things are required, in order to the enjoyment of other things, where is the absurdity for Christ to render the promised blessing certain, and to secure what is called the condition of enjoying it? "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14; "and blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," Mat. v. 8. Did Christ then change the nature of the covenant, by giving himself to redeem his people from all iniquity, and to purify them unto himself?

(3.) It is said, that Christ's sacrifice was not intended to procure any other benefit, but the removal of guilt. I wonder then how Paul could say, that by means of Christ's death, they who are called receive the promise of *eternal inheritance*, Heb. ix. 15: is that no more than the removal of guilt? How did Christ's blood purchase the church? did it only pay their old debt, and turn them loose to get to heaven, as well as they could of themselves?

(4.) It is said, that Christ's purchase of faith and repentance is repugnant to the nature of these graces. It might as well have been said, that Christ's purchase of forgiveness is repugnant to the nature of forgiveness. If Christ has purchased the forementioned graces, then God is obliged to confer them, says the objector: and where is the harm of that? Has not God obliged himself to give Christ a seed, and that "he shall see

\* "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," John xvii. 2.



the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; and that he will divide him a portion with the great, and that he shall divide the spoil with the strong?" Isa. liii. 11, 12.

How weak are these objections against our position, that Christ purchased grace, as well as eternal life, by his death! Wherein is it contrary to the nature of faith or repentance, that Christ should purchase them, seeing *faith is not of a man's self*, Eph. ii. 8, and *repentance is the gift of Christ*? Why may he not purchase them, as well as give them? Is there any thing in them too great or too small for Christ to purchase? But so dark and senseless an objection, as the last above-mentioned deserves no further notice, nor indeed that regard which has been had to it.

The objections of our opponents being thus fairly answered, our proposition stands firm and true, that Christ purchased all the necessary means of salvation, for all those for whom he died; from whence this conclusion may be drawn, that Christ did not die for all men, seeing that he did not purchase the necessary means of salvation for all men.

9. The attainment of the *end* and *design* of Christ's redemption, is highly pleasing both to Christ and to his Father.

The prophet Isaiah represents God saying, "Behold my elect in whom my soul delights," Isa. xlii. 1; and, by a voice from heaven, when Christ was entered upon his work, he said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Mat. iii. 17, and when Christ actually offered up himself a sacrifice to God, it is said to be of a "sweet smelling savour," Eph. v. 2. God was so well pleased with Christ's performance, that "he raised him from the dead," Heb. xiii. 20; received his human nature into heaven, 1 Tim. iii. 16; "crowned it with glory and honour," Heb. ii. 2; "and placed him at his own right hand," chap. xii. 2, "and gave him a name that is above every name," Phil. ii. 9; "appointed him a kingdom," Luke xxii. 29, "and made him Lord and Judge of all," Acts ii. 36; "sent the Spirit to glorify him in the world," Acts x. 42; "required all the angels of God to worship him," John xvi. 14, "and all men to honour the Son even as himself," chap. v. 23. All which things show how satisfactory and pleasing Christ's work of redemption was to God the Father. But this satisfaction could not arise from Christ's sufferings absolutely considered; for he who does not willingly grieve the children of men, Lam. iii. 33, could not take pleasure in the sufferings of his own Son, purely on the account of the sufferings themselves; but it was with a view to the end, and the fruit of them, that they were so pleasing to him. And this naturally leads us to inquire what was the end and design of Christ's giving himself, in which God took such satisfaction. What could it be less than doing the Father's will, and finishing his work, his

redeeming and saving all given him by the Father, and losing none of them; in a word, his glorifying the Father, and his "bringing many sons to glory?" John vi. 39. Christ also is represented as "set up from everlasting, having his delights with the sons of men," Prov. viii. 31; "we perceive the love of God, in that he laid down his life for us," 1 John iii. 16; "he delighted to do this will of God," Psal. xl. 8, and rejoiced in the prospect of having a body prepared for him, in which he should suffer and satisfy for the sins of men, and by dying redeem them from eternal death. This was the travail of his soul, which he was to see, and with which he was satisfied, Isa. liii. 11. This was the "joy set before him," for which he "endured the cross," Heb. xii. 2: the glory he should bring to God, and the happiness which he should procure and secure to men.

Now, if Christ redeemed men so imperfectly, and so uncertainly, as that though he died for all men, yet all men might have died eternally notwithstanding, and the most of them actually do so, what becomes of the Father's glory and man's happiness, of God's love to sinners, and Christ's strong affection to them? How could the Father be pleased in such a loose and uncertain purchase, and in so small a part of mankind, when he gave his Son to redeem all men? Could it be pleasing to him, that when he designed the redemption of all men, such a multitude should be lost, and the salvation of those who obtain it should be left so precarious, depending more on the will of man, than upon the love and care of the Father, or the redemption of the Son? With what pleasure could the all-wise God look upon such a kind of redemption as this? Or what satisfaction could Christ take in seeing the end and design of his death so greatly disappointed, if he really intended to save all men by his death, and only a remnant are saved? Or how could he be satisfied, not certainly to intend the salvation of any of those, whom he and his Father so dearly loved, and for whom he suffered such a bitter death? Could Christ be so profuse of his blood, and was his conflict with God's wrath and vengeance such a light matter, as that he could, with satisfaction, throw away the one, and endure the other, without securing the salvation of so much as one soul, instead of redeeming all men?

Upon the whole; seeing both Father and Son are so well pleased in Christ's work of redemption, and the fruit and end of it, we may conclude that Christ did not die to redeem all men conditionally and uncertainly, but that he died for a peculiar number, *who shall certainly be presented to God, with exceeding glory and joy*, Jude, verse 24, both on the part of God and Christ, and the redeemed peculiar people.

10. The redeemed are represented in Scripture, under distinct discriminating characters, or as a *select peculiar people*.

Thus they are spoken of in my text, and a multitude of other places; where they are called *Christ's people*, Mat. i. 21, *his body*, Eph. v. 23, *his sheep*, John x. 16, *the church*, Eph. v. 25, *the children of God*, John xi. 16. Christ, when he said that he laid down his life for his sheep, included in that expression the elect Gentiles, those *other sheep*, chap. x. 16, which he says *he must bring*, implying, that all the chosen shall, by him, be brought to God. And he told some of the Jews, that they did not believe, because they were not of his sheep, verse 23, implying that all his sheep, for whom he laid down his life, are brought to believe in him. How could Christ be said to be the Redeemer of his people, of his body, of the church, in distinction from others, if he is the Redeemer of the whole world, of all men? The church cannot mean the world, his people cannot mean all people; those redeemed from among men, Rev. xiv. 4, cannot mean all men, those from among whom they were redeemed; nor can those redeemed out of every people and nation, chap. v. 9, signify all people, and all nations, or all men.

Upon this head, our opponents observe, that though Christ is said to die for his sheep, his people, and the like, yet it is not said *that he died for them only*, and none besides; but it is said that he died for the *world*, the *whole* world, or *all* men. To which I reply, that though the restrictive term, *only*, is not expressed, yet it is necessarily implied, and understood, in the Scriptures, where Christ is said to die for his sheep, and for his people; for if all men were intended by these expressions, what need is there of any terms of peculiarity? If all men are redeemed, then there is not a select number redeemed; for to redeem a select number out of all men, and to redeem all men, are contradictory one to the other; so that the exclusive word, *only*, is implied in those scriptures, where Christ is said to die for his sheep, and his people. It is said, "there is one God, and one Mediator," but the word *only* is not added; shall we then say, that there are more gods than one, and more mediators than one, between God and man? When a legacy is bequeathed to one man, is it given to others, because the word *only* is not added? If when it is said, that Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it, Eph. v. 25, all men are included, because the word *only* is not added, then when men are commanded to love their wives, as Christ loved the church, they are allowed to extend their conjugal affection to all women, besides their wives, because it is not said, *Love your wives only*. This may suffice to remove the objection, and establish the proposition, that the redeemed are represented under discriminating restrictive terms; and from hence the deduction is plain, that the redeemed are a peculiar people, and not all men.

11. The *necessary means* of salvation are afforded to all those for whom Christ died, to render their salvation possible.

To deny this proposition, is to affirm that Christ died to render that possible, which, in the nature of the thing, is impossible. It is eternal life "to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ," John xvii. 1. On the other hand, not to know them is eternal death. If Christ, by his death, rendered the salvation of all men possible, on the conditions of faith and repentance, it is but reasonable to suppose that they all shall enjoy the necessary means of that faith and repentance, otherwise Christ purchased a possibility of salvation, on an impossible condition, or without the necessary conditions of that possibility, or the necessary means of attaining those necessary conditions.

The dispute, at present, is not whether any man can be saved by Christ, without faith in him, but whether any man can believe in Christ, who never knows Christ, nor has heard of him; "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Rom. x. 14, 15. The apostle's argument lies thus: They who do not hear the word, cannot believe; they cannot hear the word, to whom it is not preached; they cannot preach it whom God doth not send: therefore they cannot be saved to whom God does not send the preaching of the word. Thus the apostle proved the necessity of the means of grace, in order to faith, and of faith, in order to salvation. If then Christ died equally for all men, why is he not equally revealed to all men? If the greatness of men's sins did not hinder him from giving himself a ransom for all men, why should it prevent his revealing himself to all men? If infinite love moved Christ to die for all men, why did not the same love engage him to make himself known to all men? especially seeing without this knowledge they could have no faith in him, or salvation by him. Is it credible that Christ should shed his precious blood to redeem all men, and yet never discover this gracious design to them, to win their hearts, and engage them to believe in him, and adhere to him, to the saving of their souls? Did Christ die to render the salvation of all men possible, and then destroy that possibility, by withholding from thousands the necessary means of that faith, without which they could not be saved? Would this be acting like the only wise God our Saviour?

But it may be said, that the reason of God's withholding the means of grace from some, may be their obstinacy and unworthiness; the abuse of the light they had, and a foresight that they would abuse clearer light, if they had it. To this I answer, all men are naturally obstinate and unworthy; and if God deals with men according to their obstinacy and unworthiness, not only some men, but even all men should be excluded from the means of grace. If it is said, there are degrees of unworthiness, and some are better disposed than others, to improve the means, which may be a reason why they are granted to some, and withheld from others: to this it may be replied, that Christ

has told us, that Tyre and Sidon, and the land of Sodom, Mat. xi. 21—23, would have made a better use of his preaching than the towns of Galilee had done, yet the former never enjoyed this light, but the latter did; which plainly shows, that the means of grace are not always granted to those who God foresaw would make a good use of them, nor are withheld from such as it was foreseen would make a bad use of them. It is best therefore to rest in that reason of this procedure assigned by Christ, God's sovereign will and pleasure: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight," verse 25, 26.

The general and universal terms used, concerning "the preaching the gospel to every creature, and to all the world," Mark xvi. 15, "and to the ends of the earth," Rom. x. 18, are not to be understood in the utmost extent; for so it is evident they never were, nor can be fulfilled; seeing multitudes are dead, who never heard any thing of Christ or the gospel, Col. i. 23, or so much as any part of God's revealed will: "As for his judgments, they have not known them," Psal. cxlvii. 20. For how long a time did God suffer the nations to walk in their own ways, and winked at the times of their ignorance? nay, in the days of gospel light, some places were expressly excluded from the preaching of the word: Paul and his companions being forbid by the Holy Ghost, attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not; so that the commission to "teach all nations, and preach the word to every creature," must be explained in a general sense, and not according to the utmost extent of the words, including strictly every individual person. Not only the Jews, but the other nations were to have the light shine upon them, wherever God pleased to send his messengers; but how many are there, at this day, who know nothing of Christ, and the way of salvation by him; and is it credible that God should give his Son to be a *ransom* for all, and not give him to be a *light* to all men? Did Christ die to put all men into a salvable condition, as it is called; and then, as if he repented, leave the greatest part destitute of the necessary means of faith and salvation?

Our opponents are in the utmost distress upon this head, and know not how to reconcile an universal ransom, with a restrained and partial revelation of Christ to men. How is it consistent with the divine wisdom for Christ to die, to render the salvation of all men possible, and yet leave many of them destitute of those means, without which it is not possible, according to the Scriptures, that they should be saved? "Where there is no vision, the people perish," Prov. xxix. 18; "they are lost to whom the gospel is hid," 2 Cor. iv. 3; "such as have not the Son, have not life," 1 John v. 12; "without faith it is

impossible to please God," Heb xi. 6; "he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him," John iii. 36; "and how shall men believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Rom. x. 14. So then without faith, there is no salvation; without hearing of Christ, there can be no faith in him, or salvation by him; and by withholding the revelation of Christ from vast numbers, God renders their salvation impossible, which it is said Christ, by his death, had rendered possible: and thus the purchase of the Son is made void, by the providence of the Father, according to the scheme of our opponents. But God forbid it should be so, in reality! For what kind of wisdom or prudence could there be, either in the Father, or the Son, for Christ to shed his precious blood, to redeem myriads, to whom, after all, they did not think fit to give any notice of it, or any means of enjoying the redemption obtained for them? Or, how is it consistent with the justice or goodness of God, for him to withhold the knowledge of the way of salvation from multitudes, for whom Christ purchased a possibility of salvation? Had not men better quit their notion of universal redemption, than be so injurious to the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, as, according to their doctrine, they must unavoidably be? The difficulty is not removed by saying, that those who never enjoy the revelation of Christ, are shut out from it, by their negligence and disobedience, seeing "Christ is found of them who sought him not, and is made manifest to them that asked not after him; and all the day long stretches out his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people," Rom. x. 20, 21. There must then be some other reason of God's leaving so many destitute of the revelation of Christ; for this no good reason can be given, upon a supposition that Christ redeemed all men: but if it is allowed that he redeemed only a select number, good reasons may be assigned why the gospel is sent to some places, and not to others; and why it continues longer in one place than in another, because Christ has *much people there*, Acts xviii. 10; and in many places it never comes, because the elect, the redeemed, obtain, but the *rest are blinded*, Rom. x. 7.

Upon the whole, our position holds true, that the necessary means of salvation are afforded to all those for whom Christ died, to render their salvation possible; and hence the conclusion follows, that Christ did not die to render the salvation of all men possible, seeing all men have not the necessary means of salvation.

12. The *intention* and *design* of Christ's redemption, is agreeable to Scripture and reason, and stands clear of all absurdities and inconsistencies.

To deny this proposition, would be to cast the most injurious reflections on the Redeemer, and his work, directly contrary to

God the Father; who, on the account of Christ's becoming obedient to the death of the cross, has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.

Christ's intention in giving himself, was, according to the Scriptures, "to redeem men from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people;" and it appears to be reasonable, that his intention should be accomplished, and that he should not shed his precious blood in vain, or be disappointed of his end, with respect to the greatest part of those for whom he died. But thus it must be, if he died to render the salvation of all men possible, on condition they believe in him, and yet leaves so great a part of them under an impossibility of performing that condition, or enjoying the salvation, by not revealing or making himself known to them, as was observed before.

The Scriptures nowhere speak of a conditional, uncertain redemption of men, depending on the will of the fallen creature, as to all its salutary effects. It is contrary to reason for Christ to leave salvation depending upon the will of man, which had ruined him in his best estate, and was not at all likely to save him in his worst. How could Christ expect that the intention of his death should be accomplished in such a way? Will the fallen creature take more care to secure the good effects of his death, than the sufferer and Saviour himself did? How inconsistent and absurd must it be for Christ to exercise the greatest love towards, and inflict the greatest wrath upon the same persons, at the same time? As it must be, if he, in infinite love, died to redeem all men; and yet multitudes in hell were suffering his vengeance, at the same time he loved them, and gave himself for them. Does it not sound very harsh and shocking to say, that the saved are no more beholden to the Redeemer, than the damned? And yet this is true if Christ loved and died equally for all men. How contrary, both to Scripture and reason, is it to charge God with taking a double satisfaction for the same sins, one from Christ, and another from the damned themselves? Which yet is fact, if Christ died for all men, and satisfied the justice of God for all men. Could Christ, in infinite love, die for all men, without any fixed intention and resolution to save any one man? Could Christ come to do the will of God, and yet subject all to the will of men, and leave it to them whether the Father should have the pleasure, and Christ the satisfaction, in redemption, foretold and promised, Isa. liii. 10, 11, whether the Father should enjoy one object of his love, or Christ the travail of his soul, in one single instance or not? And yet so it was, according to their scheme, who say, that Christ died to purchase salvation conditionally for all men, but absolutely and certainly for no man, leaving to men, either to make it effectual by believing, or of no effect by their unbelief.

How shall men be convinced, that Christ crucified is the wisdom of God to salvation, if not so much as one soul had its salvation certainly secured, by Christ's sufferings, and that too when, as it is said, he died to save all men?

How contrary this notion of redemption is to Christ's intention, to Scripture and reason, and with how many difficulties and inconsistencies it is attended, may, in part, appear by what goes before, wherein I have not, to my knowledge, strained or misrepresented any thing. But, on the other hand, if God loved, and Christ died for a select number only, and effectually secured to them grace and glory, this is agreeable to Scripture and reason, advances the glory of the divine perfections, and provides most for the comfort and happiness of man, as I hope to make appear, in answer to our opponents' allegations to the contrary, when I come to that part of my work.

Upon the whole, let the propositions which have been advanced, explained, and confirmed by Scripture, with the plain deductions from them, be seriously and impartially considered; and then let all judge whether Christ intended to redeem all men, or some only, "when he gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

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### SERMON III.

TITUS ii. 14.—Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

THE death of Christ being the fountain of our life, there is nothing more necessary, pleasant, or useful to the Christian, than a right apprehension and remembrance of it: and therefore there is no doctrine of the Christian religion that has been more opposed and depraved than this; some denying that Christ, strictly speaking, died for *any* man, and others as confidently affirming that he died for *all* men, with an intention to redeem and save *all* men; whereas my text represents him as dying for a *peculiar people*. Several arguments, establishing the truth, have been insisted on, in some former discourses on this text; I now proceed to the second thing I proposed.

II. I shall *answer* the principal arguments, and *vindicate* the chief passages of Scripture, produced in opposition to the truth which I have been defending.

1. Our opponents endeavour to prove, from the *general* and *universal* scripture terms, that Christ did not die to redeem a select number only, but *all* men. And here they produce many texts, wherein it is said that Christ died for the *world*, the



*whole* world, for *all men*, and *every* man, and the like: and it must be owned that these words sound well on their side; and if they take them separately from the texts, and contexts, where they are used, and just in what sense they please, they may serve to make a flourish with, and may be a sufficient proof of the point, to such as look only to the surface, but not to the bottom of things, who more regard the sound, than the sense of the words, as used in the respective places: but such as understand an argument, must know, that no certain conclusion can be drawn from doubtful premises; nor can the general or universal terms prove universal redemption, till it is first proved that these terms are used in an universal sense, in the texts alleged: we deny that they are so used; and I hope to make it appear, that a restriction and limitation is annexed to them in the texts, or contexts, where they are used with reference to our redemption by Christ.

Before we examine particular passages, let it be observed, that they ought all to be taken in such a sense as agrees with the express end and design of Christ's death, and never in a sense contradictory thereto. Now, the intention and design of Christ, in dying for men, is plainly expressed in the following scriptures: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it, (the church,) that he might present it to himself a glorious church," Eph. v. 25; "that he might purify to himself a peculiar people," Titus ii. 14; "that he might deliver us from this present evil world," Gal. i. 4; "that we might receive the adoption of sons," chap. iv. 4, 5; "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21; "that he might bring us to God," 1 Pet. iii. 18. It could not be the intention and design of Christ to extend redemption to such as are never purified, nor delivered from this evil world, nor receive the adoption of sons, nor are made the righteousness of God in him, nor are ever brought to God; for that would be either to have his intention disappointed, or to have intentions thwarting and contradicting one another: to suppose either of which, would be highly injurious to Christ. From hence it follows, that the largest expressions used in Scripture, with relation to the extent of Christ's death, cannot be meant of all and every man, seeing Christ did not intend to sanctify every man, and bring every man to God: for if he had, he would certainly have done it; for he cannot fail in his work, nor be disappointed of his end.

(1.) A great noise is made about those scriptures which speak of Christ's dying for the *world*, or the *whole* world. Accordingly a late celebrated writer, laying great stress upon the words *the world*, and *the whole world*, tells us, that the word *world* is used almost an hundred times in St. John's writings; and that the sense which the word bears therein, must be esteemed, in reason, the proper import of the word. But how, if the

word is used in a great variety of senses by St. John? How shall we ever know the proper import of it, unless we find something in the text, or context, to determine the meaning of the word, in that particular place? If the word is used almost a hundred times in St. John's writings, yet I can find no more than nine places in all his writings, in which the word *world* is applied to our redemption or salvation by Christ; and of these nine, there is not one text in which the word *world* can be proved to signify every person that has been, now is, or hereafter shall be, in this world; which is yet absolutely necessary, in order to prove, by such a text, that Christ gave himself to redeem all men, and every man. If then it can be proved, from any one verse in St. John's writings, or from any other text in Scripture, that the word *world*, or *whole world*, must necessarily, when applied to the work of our redemption, signify every individual man, let our opponents enjoy their conclusion, that Christ died to redeem every man: but if this cannot be done, as I am confident it cannot, why should they, from general and doubtful terms, draw an universal and certain conclusion?

I do not deny that the word *world*, is by St. John, used in its utmost extent, and includes in it not only all created persons, but also all created things; as in that passage, "The world was made by him," John i. 10. But then it does not there relate to Christ's work of redemption, but to his work of creation; and so can be no proof that Christ died to redeem all men. There are a great many places in St. John's writings, and in the other parts of the New Testament, in which the word *world* is evidently used in a restrictive, limited sense. It is said of Christ, that the *world knew him not*, John i. 10. By the *world* here, as Chrysostom observes, is meant the multitude of sinners, addicted to worldly things: for the friends of God, those venerable men, knew Christ even before his incarnation; the patriarch Abraham, as Christ testifies, foresaw his coming: David, in Spirit, called him *Lord*: Moses spoke of him, and all the prophets from Samuel. I may add, when he came in the flesh, some believed in him, and his "disciples beheld his glory," and yet "the world knew him not," John i. 12, 14. By *world* here every individual person cannot be meant, seeing there were many that did know Christ: but why may not these words, *The world knew him not*, as certainly prove, that no one man in the world knew Christ, as those words, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," chap. i. 29, signify, that Christ died for all men; especially considering that the sin of multitudes of men is never taken away from them? The world then, from whom sin is taken, cannot mean all mankind; for by *taking away of sin*, is meant the taking it wholly away, as Chrysostom observes upon the place. When it is

proved that sin is thus taken from all men, we will allow that Christ died to redeem all men.

Christ said, "I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world; they are not of the world, as I am not of the world," John xvii. 9, 16. If there is a world, which Christ does not pray for, and yet a number is given him out of the world, for whom he prays, then the word *world* cannot mean all men, both those he did pray for, and those for whom he did not pray, those who are not of the world, and those that are. If then we must judge of the import of the word *world*, by St. John's writings; and if in those writings it is so often used in a restrictive sense, and never means all men, when applied to redemption, then no certain, no apparent argument can be drawn from his use of the word, for the redemption of all men, or which prove that Christ gave himself to redeem and save all men.

Christ declared, that he would give "his flesh for the life of the world," John vi. 51, "and that he gives life to the world," verse 33. Seeing then Christ does not give life to all men, the world to which he giveth life, does not mean all men; therefore no good argument can be drawn from this text for universal redemption.

Christ himself has told us, "that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved: he that believes not is condemned already: he that believes on the Son, has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him," John iii. 16, 17, 18, 36. Those words, "That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life," explain and limit God's love and intention, in giving his Son to save the world, and likewise serve, as a key, to let us into the meaning of the word *world*, and of all that is here spoken of it; that God, out of infinite love, gave his only begotten Son to redeem and save all men, all the world over, who, in time, believe on him; but such as never believe on him, they are condemned already, they shall not see life: but the wrath of God abides upon them: and hence it follows, that they are no part of that world which God loved, which he sent his Son to save; and consequently that world does not, cannot include in it every individual person, that ever has been, now is, or hereafter shall be in the world; for so taken, it must include those who are condemned already, those who shall not see life, those who have the wrath of God abiding upon them. This would be to charge God with pursuing two contrary ends and designs, at the same time, his condemning many, whom yet he sent his Son not to condemn, but to save; and his intention of

giving life to many, concerning whom he has declared, that they shall not see life; and his loving many, upon whom his wrath always abides, who by nature, were children of wrath, and were never delivered from that wrath. This would be to make God act as absurdly as these men argue. Not only in the verse cited, but in those that go before, Christ took care to explain the Father's intention, in sending the Son to redeem and save men, when he said; "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 14, 15. Here is not one word of God's love to every man, or of his intention, that his Son should redeem and save every man.

All that our opponents have to plead here, is contained in one single word, and that of a very doubtful and different signification, even the word *world*; which, in the first chapter of John, 10 verse, is evidently meant of but a part of mankind; and, for the reasons given, is so to be taken in the verses under present consideration. If our opponents deny this, and affirm, that the word *world* is, and must be, here meant of every man, it is incumbent on them to prove their assertion and confute our reasons to the contrary; otherwise our assertion, that it means only *some* men, not *all* men, is as good a proof of our doctrine of particular redemption, as their bare assertion that the word *world* means all men, can be that Christ died to redeem all men. But we will be so generous as to give up the cause to them, if they can fairly, not from this chapter only, but from any other scripture, make it appear that the word *world*, applied to our redemption and salvation by Christ, does, and must, evidently mean all mankind, without exception. And if they cannot, how vain are all their flourishes, and how impotent is all their declamation upon this word? Till this is done, they ought not to give themselves, or others, so much trouble about an ambiguous word, which is used in so many different senses in Scripture.

It may be said, if the word *world* cannot be proved to signify all men, in any place relating to redemption, yet in all such places it includes the wicked and ungodly, as well as the good, and therefore it is equivalent to an universal; for if Christ died for the evil and for the good, he died for all men, seeing the whole species, or kind, is comprehended in this subdivision. To this I answer in general, God justifies the ungodly, and he justifies the godly; and therefore according to this way of arguing, he justifies all men, which is both false and absurd to suppose; but to be more particular, it is not true, that the word *world*, in all those places relating to redemption, includes the finally wicked and ungodly.

It is indeed, boldly asserted, that the word *world* never signi-

fies the elect only, in opposition to the wicked of the world; but still the wicked of the world, in opposition to the faithful Christians. We do not deny that Christ "died for the ungodly; that when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son;" nor can it be denied that Christ died for his sheep, for his church, for believers; but then we are to know that the ungodly man, and the enemy, for whom Christ died, is the same with the good man, the reconciled, the sheep, the believer; these different or contrary denominations point out not two different sorts of men, those who are saved, and those that perish; but two different states of the same persons, what they are by nature, and what they are by grace; what they were before conversion, enemies, wicked, and ungodly; and what they are at and after conversion, reconciled, believers, faithful, the church, and Christ's sheep.

There are several places, relating to our redemption by Christ, where the word *world* is to be understood of the elect, or believers only; as "God sent his Son into the world, that through him, the world might be saved," John iii. 17; but only believers are saved through Christ; believers therefore are that world which Christ was sent to save. "Christ gives life to the world," John vi. 33, but Christ gives life only to believers; and therefore believers only are that world, to which Christ gives life. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. v. 19. But the world, to whom God does not impute their trespasses, are only believers; therefore only believers are meant by that world, which God was in Christ reconciling to himself. This last cited text does not barely exhibit to us the form of doctrine, which the ministers of reconciliation were to preach, but the matter of fact already done; God had been propitiated, by the sacrifice offered by his Son, for that world, to whom he does not impute their trespasses, but who are made the righteousness of God in him; hence it is said, "*he was*, not *he will be*, reconciling the world to himself." And the apostle first asserts, that the reconciliation was made by Christ, and then tells us, that the ministry of this reconciliation was committed to him and his brethren.

Augustine, in his dispute with the Donatists, explains the last cited scripture, as we have done: "They, (the Donatists) will not consent (says he) that the church can be signified by the word *world*, contrary to the words of the apostle, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself;" and contrary to the words of our Lord himself, who saith, "The Son of man came not to judge the world, but that the world might be saved by him;" for the world could neither be reconciled to God, nor saved by him, unless by the word *world* the church be understood, which only being reconciled to God, shall be saved by him.

The apostle tells the Colossians, that "the gospel was come into all the world, and brought forth fruit," Col. i. 6. What can here be meant by *all the world*, but believers? For in others the gospel does not bring forth fruit, as it did in the Colossians. Other places might be produced, in which the word *world* is to be understood of the elect or believers only; but I cannot find one place in which the word *world*, when used with relation to redemption, signifies those that perish, and much less such only. In answer to the objection, let it be observed farther, that supposing the whole *world* always meant the wicked and ungodly, yet it cannot be proved that it means all the wicked, and all the ungodly, those who perish, as well as those who are saved; and consequently this mighty word *world* affords no solid argument for universal redemption. It is very remarkable, that though God is said to *love the world*, yet it is no where said, in Scripture, that he loves all men: and though Christ is said to *give his flesh for the life of the world*, yet it is no where said that he gave his flesh for the life of all men, or of all mankind.

If the word *world* will not make out the point, our opponents think that universal redemption is fully proved by these words; "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world," 1 John i. 2. It is not said, he is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of every man, or of all mankind besides: that would have made the proof clear and decisive. But, before I come to the particular answer to this allegation, let it be observed in general, that those words in the text, *the whole world*, are evidently used in a limited restrictive sense: as the antithesis shows, "and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;" so that there is a whole world besides those meant by the apostle, when he says, "He is the propitiation for our sins," his own, and those to whom he wrote. Our opponents therefore stumble at the threshold, and produce a text, which, at first sight, shows, that those big sounding words, *the whole world*, do not, even in that place, signify all and every man in the world, but a part of it, distinguished from the rest, as has been already noted.

It is said, that the words, *the whole world*, never, in Scripture, signify the elect only, in opposition to the wicked, in the whole world: to which I reply, that the words, *all the world* which are equivalent to *the whole world*, are evidently used concerning the elect. "The gospel was come into all the world, and brought forth fruit," Col. i. 6. All the world in whom the gospel brought forth fruit, must here mean the elect, believers; for in others it did not bring forth fruit. The apostle John said, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. The whole world here evidently signifies the

worse and wicked part of the world; and when it is said, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," why may not the words denote the better part of the world, the elect, the church of God? We have as good a right, and greater reason, to affirm it, than others have to deny it.

[1.] The word *propitiation* seems to limit the expression to believers: "God has set forth his Son to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." The word *propitiation*, in Scripture, never extends to any but believers, or refers to any others; so vain is the attempt to apply it to all mankind, and thereby prove universal redemption.

[2.] The persons for whom Christ is said to be a propitiation, are those for whom he is an Advocate, or Intercessor; but he is not an Intercessor for all men, and therefore he was not a propitiation for the sins of all men; and consequently the apostle could not mean every individual man when he said, that "Christ was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." There is an inseparable connexion between the propitiation and the intercession: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who also is the propitiation for our sins, yea for the sins of the whole world;" for the sins of all for whom he is an Advocate with the Father; for his intercession is founded upon his sacrifice: he suffered and satisfied for those for whom he intercedes; and therefore his intercession is effectual, or prevalent with God. This seems to be the sum and scope of the apostle's reasoning; and it very clearly points out whom he intends by the whole world, for whose sins Christ is said to be a propitiation.

[3.] The scope of the apostle is to comfort weak believers, under an over-bearing sense of their sinful infirmities. The argument he uses is, Christ's pleading in heaven the virtue of that atoning sacrifice, which he had offered on earth, not only for their particular sins, but for the sins of all his people throughout the world: and a sacrifice of such virtue and extent, he intimates, would bear a sufficient plea for the remission of their sins. According to our doctrine, the apostle's reasoning is just, and the consolation strong: but what comfort can it be to a poor dejected Christian, oppressed with his guilty fears, to tell him, that Christ loved and died for all men alike; for Cain and Judas, as well as for any others; that there was a possibility of pardon and life procured for all, if they would believe and repent; this they must do of themselves, and when they have done it, they may fall from their faith into eternal perdition; and that this universal propitiation has neither purchased grace for unbelievers, nor perseverance for true believers, but left it to themselves, to believe and repent, and mortify sin, and secure eternal life by their own power? Is this the doctrine of the gospel? Is this strong consolation?

May not the poor distressed soul say, Miserable comforters are ye all? "But God has, by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for him to lie, given strong; and much better consolation to the heirs of promise, who have fled for refuge to Christ, and have laid hold on the hope set before them." Heb. vi. 18.

[4.] The words, *the whole world*, are in Scripture generally, if not always, used in a restrictive sense. A decree was made, that *the whole world should be taxed*, which whole world was no more than the whole Roman empire; Luke ii. 1. The devil is said to *deceive the whole world*, Rev. xii. 9, and yet it was impossible that he should deceive the elect: Christ said to the church in Philadelphia, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the whole world;" chap. iii. 10. The apostle Paul said to the believers at Rome, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world," Rom. i. 8, and yet a great part of the world were dead before they believed. If then the whole world generally signifies but part of mankind, we demand a reason why it must mean every man, in the text under consideration.

[5.] The apostle John was a minister of the circumcision: at first he preached only to the Jews: they would allow the Gentiles, whom they called the world, no part with them in the great salvation: and it appears to have been a distinction much in use, at first, between Jew and Gentile; the former were called God's people; the latter the world. Hence the falling of the Jews is said to be *the riches of the world*, or the Gentiles; Rom. xi. 12. Accordingly St. John might, by the world, signify the Gentiles; and teach us, that all believers, among all nations, and not only among the Jews, had the benefit and comfort of Christ's sacrifice and intercession.

[6.] It being agreed between us, that the apostle's scope and design is to comfort believers, dejected with a sense of their sins, the question is, which tends most to comfort them, the asserting that Christ procured a possible or conditional reconciliation for all men, or a certain and eternal redemption for a select and chosen number? To bring this debate to a short issue; when our opponents have spent their whole strength in asserting, and as they think, proving, that Christ was the propitiation for the sins of all mankind, without exception, yet, at last, they are forced to own, that none but final believers shall obtain eternal life; and we constantly affirm, with the Scripture, that all who believe in Christ shall be saved. Wherein, then, is their doctrine more comfortable than ours, or indeed so much? The comfort belongs only to believers, and to all such, whether Christ died to redeem all men, or some only: but those who hold the latter say, not only that such *may*, but that they *shall* believe. All that the Father has given Christ shall come,



and such as come, shall not be rejected, or fall from their faith and happiness, John vi. 37, for "Christ's sheep hear his voice, and follow him, and he gives them eternal life, and they shall never perish," chap. x. 28.—On these accounts, and on others, that might have been added, we maintain, that there was no need to assert, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of every man conditionally, in order to believers' comfort, seeing without that assertion their comfort is more effectually and sufficiently provided for: and from all the fore-mentioned reasons put together, we conclude, that God's chosen throughout the world, are the persons for whose sins Christ was a propitiation.

Upon the whole, the Scripture, when it speaks of the world of the redeemed, represents them by universal terms, but yet so as to mean the elect only. Which Prosper elegantly expresses: "In the elect and foreknown, and from all generality severed, a certain, special universality is supposed; so as the whole world is freed out of the whole world, and all men seem to be redeemed from among all men." "Now also Christ was subject to the Father, yet not for all, but for believers in him only, for whom he offered himself to the Father, as the immaculate Lamb, that he might present us to his Father, freed from all sin;" as Cyril of Alexandria expresses it. This was the sense of leading men in the church of God, after this point had been more attentively looked into and examined. Concerning which some of the ancients had expressed themselves with less care, before it came to be the subject of more close debate.

(2.) Our opponents insist much on several other general or universal terms used in Scripture, which, as they think, prove universal redemption; or that Christ gave himself to redeem all and every individual man. Here they urge the words *all*, *all men*, *every man*, with as much vehemence, and to as little purpose, as they had pleaded the words *world*, and *whole world*, in favour of their opinion. That they may not think themselves neglected, I shall cite the principal texts produced, with some short remarks upon them.

Before I enter upon the particular instances, let it be observed that the word *all*, in many places, some say near five hundred, is used with limitation, and does not signify every individual person, or thing. Thus it is said, that "Christ healed all that were sick," Mat. viii. 16, not all men who lived and died before he came in the flesh, or who lived at that time, but all that came or were brought to him. So Paul said, that "he pleased all men in all things," 1 Cor. x. 33, whereas he knew but a part of the world, and pleased but some of those he did know, and of them but few, if any, in all things. He also said, "All things are lawful to me," verse 23. What a horrid assertion would this be, strictly taken? God promised to "pour out his Spirit on

all flesh," Acts ii. 17, not every individual person, but upon some of all sorts, ages, and degrees. Prayers are to be made for *all men*, but not for all the dead and damned, 1 Tim. ii. 16, or those that have sinned to death, 1 John v. 6. So with relation to the resurrection it is said, "In Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 22, but not strictly every man, for a great number shall not die, and therefore cannot rise again, verse 51. It shows a strong bias to an opinion for our adversaries to bring this text to prove universal redemption, which when they have tortured it all they can, will never so much as prove an universal resurrection. The same may be said as to other texts they produce; however, let their allegations from Scripture have a fair hearing.

[1.] Our Lord Jesus Christ said; "I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me," John xii. 32. Now, say some, he who, by his death, *draws all men* to him, undoubtedly *died for all men*. But this text is ill chosen as a witness for universal redemption, seeing Christ could not mean all men, and every man, by the *all* that he would draw to him; for he told the unbelieving Jews that they *would not come to him*, chap. v. 40, and at the very time when Christ spoke these words, there were multitudes in the prison of hell, who could never be drawn to him in any sense. A noted writer on the other side, interprets the cited text of Christ's engaging many, throughout all the parts of the world, to believe in him; but how is that a proof of universal redemption? Chrysostom by *all*, understands the Gentiles; and by Christ's *drawing*, understands his bringing men to believe. Now, if it can be proved that Christ brings all men to believe on him, we shall readily allow, that he died, or was lifted up to redeem all men.

[2.] It is said, by the apostle Paul, that "God has concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy on all," Rom. xi. 32. By *all*, Jews and Gentiles are here meant; not as a strict universality; for so taken, God has not mercy, saving mercy on all, but upon some of them only. There is *severity* exercised towards the unbelieving Jews, verse 22, and the apostle's highest aim was to save *some* of them, verse 14, which makes it very plain, that not all the Jews, much less all men, strictly taken, are meant by the *all*, which the Scripture says God would have mercy upon.

[3.] Our opponents urge that scripture, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life," Rom. v. 18. It is observed, "that the apostle is comparing the condemnation, which was procured by the sin of the first Adam, with the free gift of justification, procured by the second Adam, as to the extent of persons concerned in

both." Be it so; Adam brought condemnation and death upon all his seed; so Christ brought justification and eternal life upon all his seed; all men, in the ordinary course of generation, are the seed of the first Adam; but all men, so taken, are not the seed of the second Adam; for the redeemed are a "peculiar people, selected out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. v. 9. And yet they may be said to be all men, in a federal sense, or all men given him by the Father, or all who, in time, believe on him. Thus the apostle himself states the comparison, in these words; "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming," 1 Cor. xv. 22, 23. It appears, from hence, that death by the first Adam, and life by the second Adam, follow union with either of them; all in the first Adam sinned, and die in and with him; all in Christ the second Adam, who are said to be his, in distinction from others who are not his, shall be made alive, shall rise, and live with him for ever. There is, then, an *all*, which is restrained to them that are Christ's; but such a distinction, or limitation, had been not only impertinent, but false, if all men were in him, or if justification of life was procured for, and offered to all men by Christ, as our adversaries explain it. In a few words, we readily allow that Christ died to redeem all those men upon whom the free gift comes to justification of life, in the same sense, as by Adam's offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation; that is, if all men are actually justified by Christ, and have the sentence of eternal life to pass upon them, then we must allow that Christ died to redeem and save all men; and till that be proved, the scripture in debate between us will be of little service to the cause of universal redemption. To say that the same *all* that died, and were condemned, in and with the first Adam, are justified, and live in and with the second Adam, is to beg the question, and to leave the devils no company in hell.

[4.] Another text pleaded in favour of universal redemption is this; "if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Our opponents argue, from this text, that those words, *all were dead*, must certainly be taken in their greatest latitude; wherefore the words preceding, *Christ died for all*, from which they are an inference, ought also to be taken in the same extent. Now, to clear the sense of the text, let us consider,

1. The apostle's scope and design is to show how we are constrained and obliged to live to Christ, and not to ourselves; and therefore every passage is to be interpreted so as may best agree

with his design. Now, if we understand these words, *all were dead*, of a being dead in sin; what argument do they afford for our *living to Christ*? All were dead in sin, therefore we are bound to live to Christ; where is the force of the reasoning? But if we interpret the words not of a being dead *in* sin, but of our being dead *to* sin, as it is elsewhere explained,\* then the reason is strong; but the argument for universal redemption is lost: for all men are not dead to sin; and if those who are, or shall be so dead, are the all for whom Christ died; then by that *all*, all mankind cannot be intended. Even some of the other side themselves, by "the all that were dead," understand not all who were dead *in* sin, but all who are dead *to* sin, by virtue of Christ's death: *all ought to die*, namely, to sin. The sense is the same with that in the beginning of the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, though more briefly expressed. According to the apostle he understands all Christians, in whom the efficacy of the death of Christ exerts itself; so far as they, by the example of Christ, are "dead to sin and the flesh," says another upon those words, *Then were all dead*.

2. The extent of the *all* who were dead, is to be taken from the *all* Christ died for. The apostle affirms so many to be dead as Christ died for; not that Christ died for so many as were dead. If *one died for all*, for all whom he loved, and for whom he rose again, then all those persons were dead, they died with Christ; the old man was crucified with him: they, by Christ's cross, became dead to sin, that they might no longer live therein. But is this the effect of the death of Christ upon all men, or upon some only? Let this determine who the all men are, for whom Christ died.

It may be objected, that there seems to be a manifest distinction between the all whom Christ died for and who were dead, and those who, by virtue of Christ's death, live; whereas if being dead to sin was the thing intended, then if it is not the same thing, yet it would belong to all the same persons, and at the same time, to be dead and to live; for the death of sin, and the life of grace, are of the same date, or commence at the same time, and extend to all the same persons; the words in the text lie thus: "And that he died for all, that henceforth they that live," implying that all those do not live for whom Christ died, but that such of them as do live, are bound to live to Christ, and not to themselves. I must say, that the objection is set in a strong light, and, at first sight, carries in it something very plausible and engaging; but yet I hope to make it appear not to be the sense of the text. The apostle here, as he often does

\* "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," Rom. vi. 6, "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness," 1 Pet. ii. 24.

elsewhere,\* and as we commonly do, uses an elliptical sort of speech, as appears from that passage, *And that he died for all*. To make which clear and full, we must add those words, "We thus judge, that he died for all, that henceforth they that live should not live to themselves;" where is understood that the *all* who were dead to sin, by the cross of Christ, at the same time received a principle of spiritual life, which was to be improved in living to Christ; so that by *all that were dead*, and *those that live*, the apostle means the same persons, though he does not take up time to say, we thus judge, that all died to sin in Christ; and all, at the same time, live in him by faith; and, from that very moment, are bound to live to Christ in newness of life. It was taken for granted, by the apostle, that men could not be *dead to sin*, but, at the same time, they must *live in Christ*; "for without him we can do nothing," John xv. 5, and therefore, without explaining all this, he describes the same persons, who were, in one sense, dead, to be, in another sense, alive, and bound to use that life in obeying and glorifying Christ. The word *henceforth* favours this sense: "Then were all dead, that henceforth they who live, should not live to themselves, but to Christ." What kind of reasoning would it be to say, that Christ died for all that were dead in sins, that henceforth among all that were dead in sins, those who live, should not live to themselves: but to say all were dead in sin, by the death of Christ, that henceforth, or from that very time, they should not live to themselves, but to Christ, who died for them, and rose again, is good and strong reasoning, and of a gospel strain. I think the argument runs clear and strong, if we apprehend the apostle thus speaking: "In persuading men to fly from the wrath to come, and receive Christ, we feel the constraining influences of his love, in dying for his people, and engaging them all to die to sin, and live to himself." If this is the genuine sense of the text, as I take it to be, the force of the objection is taken off at once; and, I hope, more need not be said in answer to it.

3. The *all* for whom Christ is said to *die*, Rom. iv. 25, are those very persons for whose justification he rose again. I ask then, did Christ rise again for the justification of all men? If not, then all mankind are not meant by the *all* for whom Christ died.

4. The *all* for whom Christ died, are *new creatures*, ver. 17; their sins are not *imputed* to them, and they are actually *reconciled* to God, ver. 19; "and they are made the righteousness of God in Christ," ver. 21. But this is not the case of all men in

\* What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (he did) that the righteousness, &c. Rom. viii. 3. So chap. v. 18. "As by the offence of one (we supply *judgment came*) upon all men to condemnation."

the world, but of all the elect, all believers; and hence it follows, that the all for whom Christ died, are not all men that ever were, are, or shall be; and consequently that from this text it cannot be proved that Christ died for all mankind.

[5.] Another text alleged in favour of universal redemption, is this which follows: "Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time," 1 Tim. ii. 4, 6. Our opponents think the cited words to be a clear declaration of the intention both of the Father and of the Son, relating to man's redemption; of the Father it is said, that he would have "all men to be saved;" and concerning the Son, that he "gave himself a ransom for all;" and hence they conclude, that *Christ died for all and every man*. In vindication of this scripture, and in answer to the argument drawn from it, let it be observed,

1. That the whole force of the argument depends upon the sense of the word *all*, which, in the very context, is used in a limited and restrained sense, and can never be proved to be used in its largest sense, in the text under consideration. A little before it is said, that "supplications and prayers are to be made for all men, for kings, and for all in authority," verse 1; now, are we here, by *all men*, to understand *every* man? Are Christians to pray for the dead, as well as the living? for the damned in hell, or the glorified in heaven? for those unborn and unknown? In the same place it is said, that *thanks* are to be made to God for all men; what! for Judas, Cain, and Antichrist, and all who are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? If *all men* to be prayed for, and for whom *thanks* are to be given, mean only *some men of all ranks and nations*, especially those who have it in their power to do more good or harm than others, as public magistrates, and the like; then by the *all men*, whom God would have to be saved, and for whom Christ is a ransom, may be meant only some men, some of all sorts, ranks, and conditions, which are to be prayed for, seeing God has now enlarged the pale of the church, the Gentiles flowing into it. The will of God that *men should come to the knowledge of the truth*, and that *they should be saved*, is equally extensive; for they are joined together, without any the least distinction, or sign of difference between them. "God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth;" all then to whom God does not grant the means of coming to the knowledge of the truth, are excluded from the all, whom God will have to be saved, and for whom Christ gave himself a ransom.

2. The *will of God* here must mean either God's signification of what he requires men to do, or a declaration of what he himself will certainly do. Wherever God's word comes, he requires all men to repent; but the event shows that he does

not give repentance to all men, or work it in them.\* He commanded Pharaoh to *let Israel go*, and yet foretold that he would *harden Pharaoh's heart*, so as he should not *hearken*, Exod. vii. 2, 3, 4, where there is a very plain distinction between God's secret and his revealed will, between what he calls man to do, and what he will do himself. The same appears in the case of Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, and in many others. When, in the text under consideration, it is said, that *God will have all men to be saved*, the meaning may be, that he requires all men, to whom he sends his word, to *seek salvation*. Some observe, that it is not said that *God will save all men*, as expressing the certainty of what he will do; but he will *have all men to be saved*, as expressing the duty of all men to seek salvation. If by the *will of God* is meant in the text the *good pleasure* of his will, or the good pleasure which he hath *purposed in himself*, Eph. i. 5, 9, then all mankind cannot be meant, by the all whom God will have to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; seeing God "works all things according to the counsel of his own will," verse 11, but God does not actually save all men; yet "his counsel shall stand," Isa. xlv. 10, "and he will do all his pleasure, in the host of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," Dan. iv. 35; "who has resisted his will," or who can do it? Rom. ix. 19. Now, this is the will of God, "that of all whom he gave to Christ, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day," John vi. 39. If, then, it was the will of God that all mankind should be saved, all mankind would actually be saved; and if all are not actually saved from sin and wrath, then the text in debate cannot mean that God will have every individual person to be saved, and consequently that Christ's giving himself a ransom for all, cannot mean all mankind, but the all given him by the Father; for, as he said, "he came down from heaven to do the will of him that sent him," ver. 38, 39.

It may be said, God willed the salvation of all men conditionally, or if they will be saved. To this I answer: for God to will the salvation of all men, if they will, is not to will it at all; for all men might have rejected. Nothing can be affirmed certainly of such a will of God, as depends upon the uncertain will of the creature. If all men will be saved, then God wills the salvation of all men; if no man will be saved, then God wills the salvation of no man; he has no will of his own who must be determined by the will of another, and that other is not determined by his will. This notion represents God as saying, I

\* "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live," Ezek. xxxiii. 11. It does not hence follow, that God would have all men, even the wicked saved, but only that he takes pleasure in the conversion and salvation of the wicked, as the last clause explains it; but that "the wicked turn from his way and live."

will that every individual person should be saved; nevertheless not as I will, but as they will. Is not this to make the will of God, mutable and uncertain? And, on this supposition, what becomes of the immutability of his counsel, Heb. vi. 17, or how "does he work all things according to the counsel of his own will?" Eph. i. 11. Is not this evidently to dethrone God, and set up man in his room?

3. The will of God, that *all men should be saved*, is commensurate to his will, that "all men should come to the knowledge of the truth:" but it is not his will that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth; for to some he does not give a capacity to know it, as idiots and madmen, and to others he does not give, yea, he actually withholds, the means "of coming to the knowledge of the truth," Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20, Acts xvi. 6, 7, xvii. 30, and some he "gives over to strong delusions, to believe a lie, that they may be damned," 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12; therefore he does not will that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth, or that all mankind should be saved.

It gives us a very ill representation of God to say, that he willed the salvation of all men if they will, when he well knew that multitudes never would choose or desire salvation from sin and wrath, and that he never would make them willing, by his own gracious power; for this is trifling with men, in a matter of the highest importance, and a pretending that love towards them, which had no reality in it, and could be no more than a delusive show and appearance of it. From what has been said, I think it may clearly appear, that the scripture which has been so largely considered, does not prove that Christ died to redeem and save all men.

[6.] It is urged, that Christ "tasted death for every man," Heb. ii. 9; and our opponents make a mighty flourish with this text, and would have us believe that it concludes clearly and strongly on their side. In answer to this, let it be considered, that the word *man* is not in the Greek text, though if it had, it would have given little or no strength to their argument; for, in reason, it must have been explained agreeably to the context, "Christ tasted death for all men," Heb. ii. 10, "or every man, who is one of the many sons to be brought to glory," and of whose salvation he is the Captain: every man that is his brother, and is sanctified by him, ver. 11, every man who is one of the children whom God had given him, ver. 13, every man who, by his death, is delivered from eternal death, ver. 17, every man that is reconciled by his death. But this is not the lot of all men in the world; and therefore when it is said, that "Christ tasted death for every man," the apostle does not mean that he died to redeem and save all mankind.

It may be said, though the words *world*, *whole world*, and *all*, may admit of a restriction, and not always signify all man-



kind, yet the words *every man*, seem so very full and express, that there is no room to evade the force of this testimony for universal redemption. To which I reply, that these very words, *every man*, are elsewhere used in a restrictive and limited sense; and therefore may be so in the cited scripture. The apostle says, "Warning every man, and teaching every man," Col. i. 28. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit with," 1 Cor. xii. 7. Nay, Christ said, "Go preach the gospel to every creature," Mark xvi. 15: not to birds or beasts, or every man that has been, then was, or should be, upon the face of the earth; but generally and without distinction, as to nation or rank, to as many as they could, wherever they came. No argument, therefore, can be drawn, for the uncertain meaning of the words, *every man*, as signifying every man that ever was, now is, or hereafter shall be, seeing they are so often taken in a limited sense; and, according to the context, are so to be understood in the scripture alleged.

[7.] Another text produced in favour of universal redemption, is the following: "He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe," 1 Tim. iv. 10. According to our opponents, Christ is the Saviour of all men, as to impetration or purchase; and the Saviour of believers, as to their actual possession and enjoyment of salvation. But here are several things to be proved before this text will establish the doctrine of universal redemption, which, I believe, will never be done.

1. It should be demonstrated, that the Saviour here spoken of is *Jesus Christ*: there is not a syllable in the text to cause us to think so. The Saviour here spoken of is said to be the *living God*, a title not appropriated to Christ, though he is not excluded from it, but is, on other occasions, so called: and it may be used of God indefinitely, who is "the Hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof in times of trouble," Jer. xiv. 8.

2. It should be proved, that the salvation here signified is *spiritual* and *eternal* salvation; whereas, to an impartial judge, it must rather appear to be meant of a *temporal* and *providential* salvation: the context, I think, carries it evidently this way, if we read the words in their connexion: "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe:" or we trust in the living God for support and preservation, in the labours, and under the reproaches, which our preaching the gospel occasions; and we have this trust in God, because he is the Preserver of all men, and especially of his own people; for godliness has the promise of this life, and also of that to come; and therefore he will preserve us here, so far as he sees fit: and it is to be remembered, that Paul had a particular intimation of this, when he first received his commission from Christ, who said, "I will appear to thee, delivering thee from the people

and the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee," Acts xvii. 16. Now, what relation has this to universal redemption? I have often wondered, how men of ingenuity and learning could lay such a stress upon this text, which is nothing to their purpose, even allowing, though I will only suppose, the opinion of some of the ancient writers to be true, that the word *Saviour* means *Preserver*, as it refers to all men; and *eternal* salvation, as it refers to believers; for even in that way it makes nothing for universal redemption. It is said, that Chrysostom, Œcumenius, Primasius, and Ambrose, came into this last interpretation; so did Thomas Aquinas, and others; but I must freely own, that the former explanation of the text seems more solid, pertinent, and evidently just and true.

3. Before this text can establish universal redemption, it must be proved, that there is an actual universal salvation: for the text does not say that God *may be*, by virtue of certain remote conditions and possibilities, the Saviour of all men; but, in that sense in which he is the Saviour of all men, he actually *is so* at present. Now, if it can be proved, that all mankind are actually saved from sin, death, and hell, the dispute is at an end at once.

4. I cannot see how they will be able to draw a possible conditional salvation out of those words, *especially of those that believe*; and as to the other part of the verse, there is nothing that looks like it. Upon the whole I conclude, that the text yields no support to the doctrine of universal redemption. Our opponents have other arguments, from reason, to offer, and some objections against our doctrine to make; the consideration of which will be the subject of my next and last discourse.

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#### SERMON IV.

TITUS ii. 14.—Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

HAVING, in some former discourses, offered several arguments in defence of the doctrine of particular redemption, in my last on this subject I made an entrance upon the consideration of the arguments produced by our opponents, in favour of the notion of Christ's dying for all men; and I went through the objection against our doctrine, which is built on the general terms used in Scripture; such as the *world*, the *whole world*, *all men*, and *every man*. I shall now examine some other objections, which are made to our opinion. Therefore,

2. I shall proceed to another set of objections, which are brought against the doctrine of particular redemption, and which the enemies of it have always in their mouths, and make a great noise with. They pretend that the opinion of Christ's dying for a certain determinate number, is inconsistent with the general calls which are given in Scripture, to all men, to believe and repent; that it detracts from the goodness and grace of God, and from the merit of Christ; that it represents God as partial or unjust to his creatures, and that it takes away all comfort from poor sinners. These things sound plausibly; but if the objections are severally and distinctly examined they will appear to be of no weight.

(1.) The patrons of universal redemption often tell us, that all men are, in Scripture, called to *repent* and *believe*; therefore Christ died to redeem all men. It is pleaded, John i. 7, that John the Baptist came to bear witness to Christ, that all men through him might believe; that the apostles, Mark xvi. 15, 16, were to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and every individual that would believe, and be baptized, was to be saved; that "the Holy Spirit was to come and convince the world of sin, because they believed not in Christ," John xvi. 8, and that the apostle Paul, Acts xvii. 30, in his speech to the Athenians, declared that "God commanded all men every where to repent."

These allegations may be thought to have a great deal in them by such as are taken by the bare sound of words, without considering their meaning; but it is a sufficient answer if we say, that seeing multitudes in the world have not enjoyed the Scriptures, nor the preaching of the gospel, it is evident that all men, strictly and absolutely speaking, have not been called to believe and repent. All the men to whom the ministry of John the Baptist extended, were far from being all men in the world; for there were multitudes dead before he was born, multitudes in his time who never heard him, and multitudes since who never knew any thing of his witness or testimony: therefore all the men that might or should be influenced by his ministry to believe, could not be meant of all the individual men in the world. The apostles "going into all the world, and preaching the gospel to every creature," must not be interpreted of all the individuals of mankind, in their day, much less of all the sons and daughters of Adam; for then they neither did nor could fulfil their commission: and the next branch of the cited scripture, "He that believes shall be saved," is rather an epitome of the gospel, which they were to preach, wherever they came, than a command to all men to believe: besides, we may understand the words, as declaring the certain connexion between faith and salvation, which makes nothing against the doctrine of particular redemption. Christ said, that the Holy Ghost

should, when he came, "reprove the world of sin, because they believed not on him;" but the world he was to convince cannot be understood of all men, or every individual man, seeing millions were dead long before that time. The apostle declared, that "God now commands all men every where to repent;" but the words imply that he did not always do it; "The times of ignorance God winked at;" but now by diffusing the light of his word among the heathen world, he more generally called men off from their idolatries, to the knowledge and worship of the true God. Every individual man in the world cannot therefore be comprehended in the apostle's expressions. If we suppose all men, strictly speaking, were called to believe, we must inquire what it is that they are called to believe: to say it is that Christ died for them, is to take for granted the thing in question, whether he died for all men: to believe that Christ is the true and only Saviour and to receive him, and depend upon him for salvation, as revealed in the gospel, is that faith which men are called to by the preaching of the gospel, and which has the promise of eternal life annexed to it; but this does not necessarily suppose that Christ died for all men.

There is a sufficient ground to preach the gospel to all, and for any person, who hears it to hearken to the call of the gospel, seeing there are many that shall be saved. It would not be thought unreasonable to urge all husbandmen to plough and sow their lands, or all merchants to send their effects abroad, because all of the one sort shall not have good crops, nor will all of the other sort have good returns; it is sufficient to put them upon action, that some, nay, many have. Ministers are compared to *sowers*, Mat. xiii. 2, and they, as well as husbandmen, are in "the morning to sow their seed, and in the evening not to withhold their hand, not knowing whether shall prosper, this or that," Eccl. xi. 6. There are three things which lay a sufficient foundation for ministers to call all their hearers to believe, and for any of them to hearken to the call. One thing is, *Christ's ability to save, to the uttermost, all who come to God by him*, Heb. vii. 25. Another thing is, *God's command*, 1 John iii, 23, *that men believe in Christ*; this is *the work of God*, John vi. 29, that which he requires, and that which he is pleased with. Besides these, there is the gracious declaration and assurance, "That whosoever believes shall not perish; and that Christ will in no wise cast out him that comes to him," John iii. 16, vi. 37. Upon these grounds the apostle pressed men to "believe in Christ," Acts xiii. 38, and preached to them forgiveness of sins, through faith in his blood; for so God has set him forth to be a propitiation, Rom. iii. 25.

The gospel declares Christ's ability to save all that come to him; that all shall be saved who do believe in him; that it is

the command of God that men do believe; and that such as do not, must perish. Here is warrant enough for ministers to preach Christ to all, and encourage all their hearers to believe on him. If they could truly tell men that Christ died for all men, yet they could not tell them that any more should be saved, than actually believe; and it is certain, that all who believe shall be saved. It is not my knowledge that Christ died for me, that is the ground of my believing in him; but the command of God requiring it, and the declaration, that whosoever does so, shall have eternal life. Upon this, I have not only a liberty and encouragement to believe, when the gospel is preached to me, but it is my duty so to do. In the Olympic games, 1 Cor. ix. 24, "there were many run, though but one received the prize;" but in the case before us, not barely one, but all who believe shall be saved: and therefore when the man put the question to Christ, "Whether there are few that be saved?" he bid him "strive to enter in at the strait gate, because many would seek to enter in, and should not be able," Luke xiii. 23, 24.

The gospel is "the power of God to salvation to every one that believes;" and seeing no man, who enjoys the gospel, can know that he is excluded, but by final impenitence and unbelief, all men to whom the gospel is preached, have the same outward call, and encouragements to believe, as all the saved have had. It was not personally made known to them beforehand, that God had chosen, or that Christ died for them in particular; but the general declarations and promises of the gospel were set before them, Christ's ability and willingness to save lost sinners, were represented to them; and the Holy Spirit enabling them to believe these things, and to embrace Christ, as he is declared in the gospel, the promise of the Redeemer, the salvation became theirs: and any person now treading in the steps of their faith, shall be a fellow-heir with them of the same happiness.

If these things be duly considered, it will appear that there is sufficient ground to call all men to believe, and for every hearer of the gospel to seek faith, without the person's knowing beforehand that Christ died for him in particular. Nor can I see how the knowledge of that, if it could be had, by an unbeliever, would help him; seeing those who say Christ died for all, yet allow, that many, even of those to whom he is preached, perish; yea, many who have truly believed. And it is granted on all hands, that without true faith and repentance, there is no salvation. They who affirm that Christ died for all men, generally say, that he did not procure them faith, nor undertake that they should certainly exert their own natural power to believe, which they are supposed to have. Wherein then are they better than others, or so well as those who are waiting at

the pool side, till the Spirit moves upon the waters of the sanctuary? which he will do, and make it not only possible, but certain, that some, yea, many, shall be saved; and every one is to wait and hope, upon these reasons and grounds, that he stands as fair for salvation as others; and should be sensible, that whether Christ died for all, or only some, yet it is certain, that without faith he cannot be saved; that it is folly and wickedness to make his misery certain, because his happiness is to him at present uncertain; and, upon the whole, that "it is good for a man both to hope, and quietly to wait for the salvation of the Lord."

I might further answer to the objection, that the calling all who hear the gospel to believe, is the way to manifest the wickedness of men, and make it appear, that their destruction is of themselves, if they neglect or refuse this salvation; seeing whether Christ died for all, or for some only, yet they can no otherwise know that they have no part in it; seeing it is very plain, and what all who understand and preach the gospel, must, and do tell the people, that "whosoever believes shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

If it should be said, if all men who hear the gospel are bound to believe that they shall or may be saved by Christ; then multitudes are bound to believe a lie, if Christ did not die for all men, seeing then all men cannot be saved by Christ. To this I would answer, that to believe that all men, who have faith in Christ, shall be saved, is no lie, but a plain certain truth; and it is as evidently false, that any man is bound to believe that he shall or can be saved without faith in Christ; therefore, though Christ died for some only, no man who, under the gospel is called to believe, is required to believe a lie; for all who do believe on Christ shall be saved. Besides, the first thing which a man under the gospel is called to believe, is not that he shall be saved by Christ, but that "there is salvation in no other;" and that if he truly receives Christ by faith, he shall be saved, but not otherwise.

(2.) It is pretended, "that the doctrine of particular redemption *detracts* from the goodness and grace of God, and the merits of Christ; and therefore it cannot be true." To this I answer, that the goodness and grace of God, and the merits of Christ, are more magnified and advantaged by the doctrine of particular redemption, than by the doctrine of universal redemption.

It does not honour the divine goodness and grace for God to leave all men open, not only to a possibility, but even a great probability of perishing, notwithstanding all that he has done to save them; and yet so it is, according to them who say, he gave Christ to die for all men, but only to render their salvation

possible. That love and goodness which secure salvation to some, though a smaller number, must be greater than that love and goodness, which provides only a remote possibility for all. It seems to show a great coldness and indifference, to leave it a second time to the mutable will of man, to secure his salvation, when man's will in its best condition, had ruined Adam, and all his posterity. Might it not well have been thought, that if infinite love and goodness was showed to all men, as it gave Christ to die for them, so it should give the Holy Spirit to apply salvation to them, to make them willing to embrace it, and fix their adherence to it?

The scriptures, Tit. iii. 4, 5, set forth the kindness and love of God in "the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." The apostle said, "God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, has quickened us together with Christ," Eph. ii. 4, 5. But how does this great love and mercy towards man appear, in giving Christ for all men, only to make it possible that they may be saved, and then leave the far greater part of them for ever ignorant of the way of salvation, and multitudes who do know it, yea, all of them, to perish in their sins, if they do not, of their own free wills, without any preventing grace, procured by Christ, or secured to them by the Father, make sure of this salvation? Is this the way to exalt the grace of God, and the merits of Christ; not to procure a certainty, but only a remote possibility of salvation for men?

If Christ died for all men, and yet leaves many of them, to aggravate their guilt, in rejecting such a Saviour, when it was known to God, before he gave Christ for them, what they would do, surely it would have been more favour to them, not to have given Christ to die for them, than after that, to leave them to sink deeper into misery, under the guilt of "denying the Lord, who bought them," as some affirm. It must surely torment the poor creatures abundantly the more, to think that when Christ had opened a door of salvation for them, no kind hand would be so merciful as to lay hold on them and draw them in.

Is it not an unworthy representation of the God of love, to say, that though he seemed to love all men, so as to send Christ to die for them, yet he loved them so little, as to leave them all to perish, if they would, notwithstanding? I may here argue as the apostle did in a lower case, when he said, "Whoso hath this world's goods, and sees his brother have need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him?" 1 John iii. 7. In like manner I may say, if God showed such infinite goodness and love to all men, in giving Christ to die for them, how was it, that when he saw their need of his Spirit and grace, and the means of grace, he should shut

up his bowels of compassion from them, leave them to themselves, and never so much as send the gospel to thousands of them?

In a few words, it does not appear to discover more, or so much grace and goodness in God, to take a distant and remote step towards the salvation of all, in giving Christ to make it possible, as in giving Christ, grace, and glory, certainly to some, yea, to a number, that no man can number; and to say, that Christ died for all men, not to purchase grace and glory for them, but only to render their salvation possible, is to depreciate, not to exalt the merits of Christ, for this is to say, that he so merited salvation, as that salvation is secured to no man; for what is only possible may never be. And if Christ by his death procured a possibility of salvation, he only removed the insuperable obstruction, that so man might become his own saviour, which is to exalt the goodness and power of the creature, and not the merit and grace of Christ. On the other hand, that grace must be infinite which gave Christ to procure, and secure eternal life, for a vast multitude of poor, perishing sinners. And that merit must be infinite, which not only paid their vast debt to justice, but also purchased for them an inconceivable and eternal weight of glory.

Thus, I think, it appears that the doctrine of particular redemption does not detract from the goodness and grace of God, or the merits of Christ, but that the charge falls justly and very heavy upon the contrary opinion.

(3.) It is confidently objected, "that it represents God as *partial*, if not *unjust*, towards his creatures, if when they were all in the same condition, he provided a remedy, a Redeemer and Saviour for some, and not for others: and the same may be said of Christ; for why should not all, in a like condition, be alike dealt withal?" I answer, that if God may make no difference between his creatures in the same condition, then he must either prove a Saviour for all sinful creatures, or for none; and then why was there no Saviour provided for devils as well as for men? Are they not God's creatures, yea, creatures of a more noble kind than man? Are they not sinful and miserable creatures, who needed a Saviour as well as man: why then are they passed by? Why did not Christ take their nature, and die for them, as well as for mankind? And if there was no blame or partiality in redeeming men, and not devils, why should it be thought a reflection upon God, to send his Son to redeem some men and not others? Where many have a just and equal claim to any benefit, there the giving it to one, and withholding it from others of them, is unjust and dishonourable; but when none of them have any just claim to it, but all have deserved the contrary, there the case is far otherwise. Where many have deserved punishment, and some are ex-



empted from it, without any satisfaction to the law, whilst others are made to suffer the law, there lies a charge of unjust partiality; but this is not the case before us: though God exempts that particular number from condemnation, for whom Christ died, yet it is upon satisfaction made by their Surety and Saviour, and in punishing the rest he does them no wrong, for he inflicts upon them nothing but what is the proper desert, and the due wages of sin.

God in his word has vindicated this right of sovereignty to himself, to bestow his favours upon whom he will; as in this passage, "Who art thou, O man! that repliest against God? Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour?" Rom. ix. 20, 21. The objection of partiality proceeds from the pride and envy of man, as Christ informed us, when he said, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?" Mat. xx. 15. We see in the daily distributions of providence a great inequality; some are rich, others poor; some healthy, others very sickly; some born deformed, others well shaped: some wonderfully preserved, others exposed to many perils; some have the clear light of the gospel, and millions know nothing of Christ; and, shall not God, be just, because he is thus partial?

(4.) It is objected, "that the doctrine of particular redemption takes away all *comfort* from poor sinners; therefore it is not true." To this I answer, that the word of God affords no comfort to sinners, whilst they remain in impenitency and unbelief. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked," Isa. xlvi. 22. "He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him," John iii. 36. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," Luke xiii. 5. Supposing Christ did die for all men, yet that can yield no comfort to a man that lies under the wrath and curse of God.

Those who say that Christ died for all men, do not say that all men shall be saved, or that it is so much as probable that they should. They do not suppose that Christ is engaged, by any special love, or covenant, to save any man, who enjoys the gospel, any more than those who never enjoy it, or those who are in hell. Nor do they pretend to say that all, or the greater part of such as enjoy the gospel, will believe and be saved; and if they do not, what comfort can it afford men to think that Christ died for all men, when if it is so, that will but aggravate their condemnation and misery, as rejecters of Christ and his salvation?

All who believe and repent have the greatest grounds of joy and comfort, though Christ died to redeem and save some men only: this is "strong consolation for all the heirs of promise, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on Christ the hope set

before them." But, what comfort can that doctrine afford, which leaves all men at uncertainties, whether ever they shall be saved, though Christ died for them, and they believe in him? Because by his death, as the friends of it say, he established no certainty of their perseverance and salvation, ratified no absolute promises, did not procure them persevering grace, or that guidance of the Holy Spirit, which shall end in eternal life.

How is the covenant ordered in all things and sure? What consolation can he draw from it, who, though he may plead the gracious promises of it to-day, may be excluded from all interest in them to-morrow, and have no promise to plead for his recovery, nor any reason to hope that that blood, which he says was shed for him, shall do any thing else, but plead against him, as one trampling it under foot? Whereas upon the foot of particular redemption there is room to expect, that where the gospel comes, some, it may be many, will be brought home to Christ by it; for *all that the Father hath given him shall come*; and if *they fall, they shall rise again*. The promises are sealed and sure; effectual grace and eternal glory are purchased for them: Christ loves their persons, and will not permit any of them to perish; he pleads his death for them, undertakes to protect and guide them by his Spirit, till he has brought them safe to glory. Though they see no worthiness in themselves, yet they may plead his special love to them, and his giving himself for them, not only to make their salvation possible, but certain; and thus he has given them everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.

If we tell a man in distress and anguish of spirit, for his reigning impenitency and unbelief, that Christ died for him, seeing he died for all men, and therefore he may be of good comfort, how easily may he reply, Be it so, that Christ died for all men, and so for me; yet I may perish as well as Cain and Judas: if Christ made my salvation possible by his death, yet I may make my damnation certain by my unbelief. What will it profit me, that Christ died for me, if my own treacherous unbelieving heart shuts me out from salvation? I do not perceive, that he purchased either grace or glory for me, but I am left to my own free will, which I find set against divine things, and bent upon what is evil; I have no absolute promises to plead, no assurance that Christ procured the Holy Spirit to help such as I am, or that Christ loved any man living better than thousands, whom he left to perish in their sins; of what advantage then is it to tell me, that Christ died for me and all men? If Christ had been a propitiation for my unbelief, as well as my other sins, I might have entertained some hope, that I should have been delivered from it; but now, though Christ died for all men, I may perish in my unbelief, as inevitably as if he had died for no man.

This I take to be a just representation of the case; and surely it is not hard to infer from what has been said, that the doctrine of Christ dying for *some men*, to secure them grace and glory, affords more solid comfort than the pretence that he died alike for *all*, to render their salvation *barely possible*, but purchased for them by his death neither grace nor glory, but left them to shift for themselves, to get faith and preserve it, if they could, or else to perish, as millions have done before them.

#### APPLICATION.

1. If Christ has rendered the salvation of his people certain, he must needs be a *mighty* and *powerful Redeemer*. The Scripture has assured us, that "God laid help upon One who is mighty," Psal. lxxxix. 19, and the Most High is introduced speaking thus, Isa. xlii. 1. 4: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; he shall not fail, nor be discouraged." It would be unbecoming the wisdom and faithfulness of God, to give the character of a Saviour to an insufficient person. Redemption is the glory of all his works, but it would have been the disgrace of them, if he had appointed a person to redeem us, who was unable to do it, and who had failed in the performance; for then the chosen seed had been lost, the design of his love had been disappointed, the Sun of righteousness had set in an everlasting cloud of darkness, and the wisdom and truth of God had suffered an eclipse. Seeing then God has chosen Christ to save men, and has proposed him as a sufficient Redeemer, we may conclude he is such an one; for the infinitely wise and good God would never have made choice of one, who was not equal to an undertaking, upon which his honour and man's happiness so much depended.

We cannot doubt of Christ's ability to save, if we consider his person and qualifications. In his person he is God-man, *God manifested in the flesh*; all the perfections of God, and all the capacities of man meet in him. Hence he was capable of obedience and sufferings as man, and of bearing the weight of vengeance, as his divine power supported the human nature. As man he could be humbled, crucified, and buried; as God he could raise himself from the dead, fill all things, convert the elect, confound the wicked, triumph over Satan, and bring many sons to glory. The church is taught to place her confidence in this, that her Saviour is God; not a made God, but the Lord Jehovah: hence she could say, Isa. xii. 2, "I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is become my strength, and my song." If the eternal God cannot be a refuge, and if his everlasting arms cannot uphold us, who shall? where is salvation to be had, if not in him "in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who has all power in heaven and earth?"

When Christ's human nature was formed in the womb of the virgin, "the power of the Highest overshadowed her," not only so as to produce that nature in an extraordinary manner, but also, so as that the Son was for ever closely united to it, from the first moment wherein the humanity did exist. Viewing the Redeemer in this light, we may well conclude that he is *mighty to save*. It is therefore very good advice which is given us, to "trust in the Lord for ever," Isa. xxvi. 4, "for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength." We may say of our Saviour, as Job once said, Job xlii. 2, "I know that thou canst do every thing:" he can do every thing consistent with the glory of God, and the counsels of his will.

Christ fulfilled the law, suffered its curse, proved his divine mission by miracles, and manifested his Deity in his resurrection: "he made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness," enlightened many dark minds, bowed many stubborn wills, sanctified many impure minds, gave them first grace, and then glory. Christ even when he was suffering in weakness, seemed to yield to the malice of his enemies, and was dying under his Father's vengeance; yet to make it evident, that he was able to save, put forth an act of his almighty power upon the heart of one who was dying with him, and first made him "willing in the day of his power," and then carried him up to his celestial palace. "This day," said he to the converted thief, "shalt thou be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43. The consideration of the time, place, and circumstances of this conversion, tends much to illustrate Christ's saving power. Satan was now gaping upon the prey, just ready to devour the poor thief, who was dying in all his guilt and wickedness: one Evangelist tells us, "That they that were crucified with Christ reviled him," Mark xv. 32, though another says, "that one of the malefactors railed on him, but the other rebuked him," Luke xxiii. 39, 40. These two accounts may be thus reconciled: when the malefactors were first nailed to the cross, they both of them spit out the venom of their wicked hearts against Christ; but in a little time, one of them began to relent: he felt a divine power from the dying Jesus coming upon him, which opened his eyes, changed his heart, caused him to rebuke his fellow-sufferer, to pray to his dying Saviour, and to believe and own his sovereignty and kingdom; and that when both the Saviour and the saved were in the agonies of death; this was a wonderful instance and evidence of Christ's saving power. Whilst Christ was in this world, the winds and the seas obeyed him; his enemies fell at his feet, and licked the dust when he pleased; the devils fled before him; many believed in him, to the saving of their souls: all which makes it very plain and evident, that Christ was mighty to save, a sufficient Saviour.

Christ invites all the *weary* and *heavy laden* to come to him

for rest; which shows his ability to save all such as come to God by him. Was there any guilt which a redeemed soul could contract, any power of sin in such an one, which Christ could not expiate and subdue, his invitation would be all delusion. It is necessarily implied, and supposed in the invitation, that Christ is able to save every soul that is enabled to comply with it. Christ's ability to save is abundantly declared in the Scriptures: "Is my hand," says Christ, "shortened at all, that it cannot redeem; or have I no power to deliver?" Isa. l. 4; "who will contend with me? let us stand together," ver. 8, 9. There is no opposing the Redeemer; "he takes away the captives of the mighty, and the prey of the terrible, for the Saviour is the mighty One of Jacob," Isa. xlix. 24, 25. Satan, the prince of this world is spoiled, judged, and cast out, Col. ii. 15, John xvi. 11, xii. 31. "The handwriting that was against us, which was contrary to us," Col. ii. 14, Gal. iii. 13, "is taken away, Christ hath nailed it to his cross; he redeemed his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them: he has abolished death, and swallowed it up in victory, and brought life and immortality to light," 2 Tim. i. 10; "he is the life, the eternal life; his people reign in life by him," 1 Cor. xv. 54; hence *death* and *hell* are said to be *cast into the lake of fire*, Rev. xx. 14. Christ saves all the redeemed from death and misery. The Scriptures declare, "that there is salvation in no other," Acts iv. 12; "he is God's salvation to the end of the earth," Isa. xlix. 6; which shows Christ to be a powerful Redeemer indeed. The promises are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus; they are all confirmed by him: the promised grace and glory are purchased, and shall be applied by him; and therefore he is a mighty Saviour.

It is easy to cite a great number of particular promises relating to the several parts of our salvation; but I shall content myself with one or two, wherein the Holy Ghost has summed up all the rest: "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life: this is the record that God has given us eternal life; and this life is in his Son," 1 John ii. 25, v. 11. But in vain were such comprehensive promises made, if Christ was not able to fulfil and make them good. God has promised that "Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation, Isa. xlv. 17. Christ, then, is not only able to repulse the enemy once for a little time, but to secure his redeemed for ever; so as "the enemy shall no more exact upon him," Psal. lxxxix. 22, or pluck them out of his hand.

Christ's sufficiency for the work of redemption, appears from the *dignity* to which he is raised in the celestial world. There he is a prevailing intercessor with God. Some might be apt to think this to be an argument of weakness, but in Scripture it is produced as a proof of Christ's ability to save: "Wherefore he is able to save them, to the uttermost, that come to God by him,

seeing he ever lives (in heaven) to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25. Christ's intercession shows him to be an able Saviour; for the Father would never have admitted him to plead his merits in heaven, if he had not paid a full price of redemption on earth: his plea is not as a supplicant for mercy, but he pleads law and justice: and therefore says peremptorily, "Father, *I will*, that those whom thou hast given me, should be with me, to behold my glory," John xvii. 20. He well knew that his sacrifice would support his claim; and his life in heaven is a glorious evidence of his saving power: so that every Christian may, with Job, rejoice in this, "that his Redeemer liveth," Job xix. 25. This shows that he has satisfied justice, conquered death, and is able to save us by his life: the same power by which he rose from the dead, and ascended up into glory, is sufficient to "raise us up together with him, and make us sit together with him in the heavenly mansions, which he is gone to prepare for his people," John xiv. 2. Christ taught his people to build a certain expectation of their eternal life upon his, when he said, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. He who is our advocate perfectly understands every case, which he undertakes to plead: he is always heard, because he pleads a merit which is always acceptable to his Father; and he pleads for a happiness which is entirely agreeable to the Father's purpose and promise: they therefore cannot miss of salvation, who have such an advocate before the throne. He never intercedes in vain; God gives him his heart's desire, and withholds not the request of his lips: he prayed for Peter, that his *faith might not fail*, and the effect followed: he was recovered from his sad fall, and enabled to strengthen his brethren. Thus the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal bodies; we are as dying, and yet behold we live, because Christ ever lives in heaven, to make intercession for us, and so is able to save us to the uttermost from all sin and misery, and that for ever. In the gospel-glass, we may see "Jesus crowned with glory and honour," Heb. ii. 9, which is a convincing evidence, that he has procured eternal salvation for us. It is not once to be thought that God would have given such honours to an imperfect insufficient Saviour: to what purpose should God have set him over the works of his hands, who was not able to govern and over-rule them all to his own ends? or why should the redeemed ascribe to him "glory and honour," Rev. v. 9, as redeeming them to God by his blood, if he had failed in that work, and had not procured for them "a crown of glory that fades not away?" Why was the gospel proclaimed, and the converting or comforting Spirit sent down from heaven? why were all the angels of God required to "worship the Saviour, and minister to the heirs of salvation," if the Saviour was impotent, and the salvation of the redeemed either imper-

fect or uncertain? If Christ failed in the purchase, why was "he exalted to give repentance and remission of sins?" Acts v. 31, for surely, he that is able to do this must be able to save to the uttermost.

In the great day, Christ will raise up all given him by the Father, without letting any be lost or wanting, John vi. 39. Jude ver. 24, saying to his Father, "Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me; a glorious church, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing," Heb. ii. 13, Eph. v. 27; this will be done with exceeding joy, both on the part of the Father who chose them, the Son who redeemed them, the Holy Spirit who sanctified them, ministers who espoused them to Christ, and on the part of the redeemed, who enjoy this glorious salvation. Christ's ability to save, will appear in the clearest light in that day, when "he shall come to be glorified in the saints, and admired in all them that believe," 1 Thess. i. 20. If we believe the scripture account of these things, there will be no room to question Christ's power to save. Even such as make light of it now, the last day will reveal it, "when Christ shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation," Heb. ix. 28, all sin being expelled out of the redeemed, and all sorrows removed from them, their bodies being the glorious mansions of more glorious souls, all the saints being joined to Christ, that infinitely more glorious head, good angels adoring the Saviour, and admiring the salvation, and evil angels and men lying under the feet of his vengeance, filled with shame, horror, and eternal confusion. Now, we see through a glass but darkly, but then the Saviour will appear in all the glory of his saving power.

2. Such as are redeemed, may with admiration think on an *all-sufficient* Redeemer, being appointed to undertake their cause; for herein regard was had to man's impotency and misery. God had tried the strength of man: when Adam was in the state of innocence the head of mankind, and the trustee of their felicity, he soon fell, and ruined himself and his posterity: therefore it was not fit to intrust our happiness in such a hand again, much less in the hand of a sinful creature. God saw it needful to appoint his own Son to be our Saviour; he well knew his wisdom, power, faithfulness and immutability, his love to his glory, and to the happiness of man: he laid him as a sure foundation, a tried corner-stone, able to bear the weight of the whole building. No less a person could either satisfy for sin, or turn a soul from it, raise a body from the grave, or conduct a soul to glory: "no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for his soul;" nor was it in the power of the chosen seed to deliver themselves from the tyranny of Satan, or the miseries of the present state. Such a Saviour as Christ was therefore necessary for us: God suited the remedy to the dis-

ease; the strength of the Saviour to the weakness and misery of the sinner: *Such an High-priest became us*, was fit and suitable for us; impotent and miserable sinners stood in need of a strong and merciful Saviour.

God would have his chosen not barely redeemed from hell, and brought to heaven; but he would have it done in such a way, as should be most to his own and his Son's honour. The apostle speaks of *salvation in Christ, with eternal glory*, 2 Tim. ii. 10, not barely *salvation*, but a *glorious* salvation: a salvation which shall be to the honour of him that contrived it, of him that purchased it, of him that applied it, and of them who enjoy it. Concerning our Saviour, it is said, "his glory is great in thy salvation; honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him," Psal. xxi. 5. When Christ was going to suffer, he therefore put up such a prayer as this: "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee," John xvii. 1. God provided a mighty Saviour, who was able to retrieve the honour which the first Adam had lost; he came short of the glory of God, but Christ in all things acted to his own and his Father's glory, both before he died, and since. He was ushered into the world with the songs of angels, resounding, "Glory to God in the highest," Luke ii. 14; and he went out of the world into a state of heavenly glory, where the Father and Son are continually praised for this wonderful salvation: for which reason, among others, heaven may be spoken of as a state of eternal glory.

God resolved in saving men, to destroy sin, and to vanquish Satan. This was a work too great to have been accomplished by any other than one who is almighty. It required the wisdom and power of a God to make an end of sin, and destroy Satan; to turn him out of his throne, and to cast his infection out of the soul. Satan was strongly fortified, deeply entrenched in the heart of man; he was a vigilant and subtle ruler, and not easily expelled; he baffled Adam in his state of integrity, and gained the throne when he had no friends in the soul beforehand; how then should a fallen creature be able to turn him out, when a holy creature could not keep him out? how could human power destroy sin, when it could not prevent its entrance into the heart, and its infecting our whole nature? It was necessary therefore, that this work should be undertaken by one who was infinite in wisdom and power, and so able to accomplish it. Christ therefore comes forth, "walking in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save."

God exercised his infinite love to his chosen, by committing the care of their salvation to Christ. He well knew all the designs of his love were secured by this. The kindness of God appeared in this, that the Saviour whom he appointed, was no weak one, but able to save to the uttermost: his power, grace,



wisdom and merit were all infinite; and therefore poor timorous Christians may safely commit their souls to him, in a way of reliance without being afraid. "In his love and in his pity, God saved his people, and carried them all the days of old;" and thus he deals with them, at all times, and in the present time. We have a wonderful instance of God's love to his chosen, in his giving his only begotten Son for them. Salvation is not straitened in him; the divine love dilates itself in unmeasurable dimensions, in raising up for us such a horn of salvation as Christ is; the mighty God is the prince of peace. A Christian can be in no distress, which the mighty Saviour is not able to free him from. Every believer may say, in the highest sense, as Hezekiah did in a lower case, "I had great bitterness, but thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." Isa. xxxviii. 17. In Christ the mighty Saviour, all the kind intentions of divine love are accomplished, and therefore God from the beginning chose us in Christ, that we should be "without blame before him, in love." Eph. i. 4.

3. How great is the *folly* and *misery* of all those, who seek to any other but Christ to save them? All the herd of idolaters "fly to a refuge of lies, and pray to a God that cannot save them," Isa. xlv. 20. In what confusion will they be, who have neglected the mighty Saviour, and his great salvation, when God shall say to them, "Where are your gods which you have made you? let them arise, if they can save you, in the time of your trouble," Jer. ii. 28. Some say to the works of their own hands, that they are their gods; and no wonder, if when they have exalted a created thing into a god, they degrade God the Saviour into a creature: they see no need of an infinite fund of power or merit in a Saviour, who are so full in themselves; but to all the rout of pagan, Romish, and Arian idolaters, those words of God may be applied, "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; this shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow," Isa. i. 11. They who slight the mighty Saviour, spoken of in the former part of the chapter, and set up gods and saviours of their own, will meet with eternal sorrow and anguish in the end, when they lie down in the grave, and make their bed in hell. How will it rend their hearts with a thousand agonies, when they shall be forced to say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," Jer. viii. 19, 20, the reason of which is premised; "they have provoked me to anger with their graven images, with strange vanities." Is not this the case of such as set up a saviour, who is neither a god nor a creature, as well as of those who worship images, or trust to their own good works to save them?

4. How acceptable should the *Gospel* be, both to them that preach it, and to them that hear it: Every minister who loves the glory of God, and the happiness of men, may be very glad that he has such a message to bring to the people as the angel had, when he said, "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;" Luke ii. 10, 11;—a mighty Saviour, an all-sufficient Saviour, who is able to deliver all who come to God by him, from sin and Satan, death and hell. "How beautiful should the feet of those be that publish salvation, and say to Zion, thy God reigneth;" Isa. lii. 7. We have lived to see the message and messengers treated with contempt. What Paul says, 1 Tim. v. 15, is a *faithful saying*, and *worthy of all acceptation*, some think is not worth their hearing. A Saviour who pursues the designs of distinguishing unchangeable love, and effectually saves all the redeemed, is despised and rejected, but without reason, and at the peril of such as do it; for the despisers must wonder and perish; but the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous; because the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly:" when ministers are *clothed with salvation*, the *saints should shout aloud for joy*.

5. Has Christ rendered *certain* the salvation of his people; what *pleasure* and *delight* may they take in him! Whatever troubles they have in the world, Christ says to them, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33. Have we strong enemies to fight against us? we have a stronger Saviour to fight for us; Satan and the world are conquered enemies, and the weakest believer shall come off "more than a conqueror, through him that loved him," Rom. viii. 37. Doth our heinous guilt cry strongly against us for condemnation? the Christian should comfort himself in this, that the blood of Christ cries louder in the ears of God for pardon and forgiveness. A believer has abundant reason to rejoice in God his Saviour, not only because there is no other, but also because there is nothing wanting in him. In him there is wisdom for the weak, righteousness for the soul that is ashamed of its own nakedness, sanctification for the polluted, and redemption for those who are waiting for the glorious liberty of the children of God. With what delight then may the believer sit under the shadow, and how sweet may the fruits of this mighty Saviour be unto him!

With what joy might we draw water out of the wells of salvation; what comfort might we receive from the mighty Saviour, could we but live upon him by faith! When the roaring lion utters his voice, when the world rages, when within are fears, and without are fightings, yet what rest and peace might we have in Christ, could we but know *whom we have believed*,

and be "persuaded that he is able to keep what we have committed to his trust, against the great day!" 2 Tim. i. 12. Christ wants no power or will to secure the souls and the salvation of such as by faith commit themselves to him; he is *the consolation of Israel*, Luke ii. 25, and the Holy Spirit is the *comforter* of the faithful: he takes of the things of Christ, and comforts the Christian with them.

When the poor Christian is ready to sink under the burden of the body of sin, he may take comfort in that deliverance from it, which he shall shortly receive from the hand of Christ. When the weak believer is dismayed with fears, lest the enemies of his salvation should overcome and ruin him; this may quiet him, that all the powers of darkness shall never be able to pluck one lamb out of Christ's bosom, nor the most feeble sheep out of his almighty hand, John x. 28.

When fear and horror shall seize all the Christless world, at Christ's second coming, the faithful shall lift up their heads with joy, because their mighty Redeemer then comes to complete their salvation. In the mean time, the Christian may take comfort in this, that though there are many changes and disappointments in the world, yet Christ is ever the same; and may say, blessed be God, for blessing me with all spiritual blessings in Christ, that in him the heirs of promise might have *strong consolation*. All things in this world will shortly fail us, or we must leave them; but here is the comfort to the Christian, that his Redeemer lives: though the heavens and earth shall perish, yet Christ is the same; the same in power, merit, wisdom, grace, and glory; and these shall have no end, no change. We have no reason to call in question the compassion of Christ's heart, or the power of his hands: that is a most comfortable promise concerning Christ, which is in Micah's prophecy; "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: and they shall abide; for now shall he be great to the ends of the earth," Micah v. 4. In Christ there is infinite everlasting strength to overcome all his people's enemies, to remove all their difficulties, and supply all their wants; the redeemed people therefore shall abide, the gates of hell shall not prevail against them; for their Saviour is great, and shall be so to the ends of the earth; he shall have a growing and a lasting kingdom.

Let us then, when dejections and fears prevail, fix our thoughts upon such scriptures as set forth the power and grace of Christ; of which this is one: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love," Zeph. iii. 17. If there be no loveliness in us, yet he will take satisfaction in showing love to us, in saving his poor distressed people: his love is not confined within such narrow limits as ours, nor does he want

wisdom or power to enable him to do whatever his love inclines him to do for our good.

6. What reason have believers to cast all their care upon Christ, depending upon his ability to save them! Every true Christian may say, if Christ's blood is not sufficient to cleanse away my guilt, or his wisdom and power great enough to chase away mine enemies, or his love strong enough to do both for me, then I am content to perish; but I know he can, and he will keep what I have committed to his trust: I have reason to trust him; our fathers did it, and they were delivered: I am directed to cast my burden upon him, and he has promised to sustain me; "Trust in the Lord for ever," says the prophet, Isa. xxvi. 4, and he gave a good reason for it; "for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength."

In our passage through this world to the heavenly Canaan, the church is represented "as going up, leaning upon her beloved," Cant. viii. 5. Here is our rest, here is our safety; our strength consists in our dependence upon the strong and mighty Saviour; "we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Let us then make this use of Christ's strength, ability to save, even to trust in him, resigning ourselves to him, and depending upon him; to do in us, with us, and for us what ever may be for his glory and our salvation. Paul in his conflict fled to Christ, and found present help: he said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9. The less strength the Christian has, the more Christ will exert his power.

7. How *inexcusable* will *unbelievers* be another day! Christ is a most suitable engaging object of faith: what is there in him to create a distrust? what is there not in him that may encourage a dependence? He has all the qualifications necessary to enable him to save his friends, and destroy their enemies; there is no want of wisdom, grace, merit, or power in him; he is most inviolably faithful in his engagements, and in all his declarations. There is, therefore, good reason to believe the scripture account of him, to rest and rely by faith upon him; and they who refuse to do it, where the gospel comes, will aggravate their condemnation thereby. It is true, they could not believe of themselves; but it is as true, that they of themselves put forth positive acts of distrust of Christ, think him to be false, and reckon salvation a fiction.

8. How dear and precious should Christ be to all Christians! He has done great things for us, he is doing great things for us, and he will yet do greater things for us. How should we endeavour to exalt him, to magnify him, both in life and death. The mighty Saviour can never be too highly esteemed, or too highly extolled by us. God has said, he shall be exalted, and be very high: let us then grow in our esteem of him; *he is fairer*

*than the sons of men.* The Saviour and his salvation will appear glorious when all the glory of the world will be turned into darkness and horror; and when Christ appears, the saints shall appear with him in glory: this thought should raise our affections, and inflame our love to Christ. Every redeemed soul should say, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour: he is my Lord, and I will exalt him; he is the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely:" he fulfils the Father's decrees, glorifies all the divine perfections, destroys all God's implacable enemies, and brings all the chosen seed to glory; not one shall be wanting, nor the least spot or imperfection shall be found in any of them. How glorious is Christ in this appearance; the object of the Father's love, and therefore he deserves ours. Let us love the Lord then, let him be very dear to our souls, who is thus "glorious in his apparel, walking in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save."

9. We may learn what a *glorious church* the great Saviour will have, when all the saints are gathered together in one. The general assembly and church of the first-born will make no mean appearance in the great day. If three thousand were added to the church in one day, and multitudes soon after, what a vast congregation will all the saved make, when they meet together at Christ's right hand! It will then be seen that he did not labour in vain, and die for nought: the redeemed will appear to be a "number, that no man can number, out of all tongues, kindreds, and nations;" which will be a full evidence, that our Redeemer has not left the salvation of his people uncertain.

10. What reason have all the redeemed to admire and honour the *sovereign saving grace* of God and Christ! Peter said thus to the Christians to whom he wrote, "Ye are a chosen nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth his praise, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. A Christian may say, How is it, Lord, that thou shouldest love and redeem me, give thyself for me, and then reveal thyself to me, pour out thy blood upon the cross, and pour out thy Spirit into the heart of such a worthless worm as I? Lord, why did not I as well as others, receive the just wages of my sins? why did my Saviour pay my debt, when so many others, fallen angels and men, must be paying theirs for ever? O glorious, sovereign, distinguishing grace! not to me, not to me, but to thy name be all the glory: peculiar love calls for special thankfulness. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that whilst this salvation is hid from others, it is revealed to me; and that I have been enabled to receive the atonement, and to joy in thee through Jesus Christ my Lord. This is a thank-offering which becomes all the redeemed,

but it will be done infinitely better, when the saints come to sing the song of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem, according to this model of it: "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation," Rev. v. 9. Those who stand with Christ upon "mount Sion, having his Father's name written on their foreheads," Rev. xiv. 1. 5, who are redeemed from the earth, should often sing that song, which none but they can learn, "who are the redeemed from among men, and are the first-fruits to God, and to the Lamb." But not only good words and good affections are to be given to their God and Saviour, but the redeemed peculiar people ought to be zealous of good works. Those who are bought with such an invaluable price as Christ's blood, ought to glorify him in their bodies and spirits: his love, as well as his authority and right, should "constrain us not to live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, and rose again."

11. What *encouragement* is there for us to wait for *salvation* by Christ, to lie at his feet, and hope in his mercy? The saved are a numberless number, sinners of all ages, sizes, and circumstances: the Saviour set forth in the gospel, is able to *save to the uttermost all who come to God by him*. Those who are left to their own wills perish; God works a work which they in no wise believe: they will not come to Christ that they may have life; but those committed to the care of Christ shall come; he makes them willing in the day of his power, by his word and Spirit, and the pastoral rod of his strength. It is good then to *wait at wisdom's gates*; for such as *find Christ, find life*. There is encouragement to hope for mercy, if we wait for it, in the way which Christ has prescribed: he has said, "Seek, and ye shall find; search the Scriptures, they testify of me; come to me all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest." The Psalmist uses an argument which is grown much stronger since his time: "our fathers trusted in thee, and they were delivered," Psal. xxii. 4. We may say not only the patriarchs and prophets, but the apostles, the primitive church, and multitudes down to this present time, have trusted in Christ, and have been saved by him; therefore "it is good for us to wait and hope for the salvation of the Lord." It is our business to prove our election and redemption by our effectual calling. If we believe, we shall be saved; if we never do, then there is no salvation for us. It is a great encouragement that there is a Saviour, infinite in grace and merit, who will give the water of life freely, to every one that thirsts; and we have as fair an opportunity as thousands before us, who ventured their souls on Christ, and were kindly received by him.

12. Let us not *sink* under the *greatest discouragements* which we meet with in the course of providence. Valuable

and useful instruments are taken away, or laid aside: faithful and able ministers die; but Christ lives still; and blessed be the Rock of our salvation. Christ is *mighty to save*; and with him is the *residue of the Spirit*: it is he that made those who are gone what they were; and he can give the same Spirit and gifts to others, or work the same effects, by less able and likely means. We should then cry to the Lord God of Elijah, to pour out more of his Spirit on his ministers and people, that salvation work may be carried on, not by human might and power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. Christ has promised to be with his ministers and people to the *end of the world*, if they teach and do what he has *commanded*, Mat. xxviii. 20. Let us then, in his own way, depend upon his promise, and wait for his blessing, who “walks in the greatness of his strength, and is mighty to save; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory, to our exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour Jesus Christ; be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

THE DOCTRINE  
OF  
CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS OPENED:

IN THREE SERMONS.

By MR. THOMAS BRADBURY,

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SERMON I.

ROMANS viii. 32.—He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

THESE words bear a full proportion to the design for which I have taken them; that is, they show us the SUFFERINGS of CHRIST, in their *reality*, and their *imputation*: that Messiah the Prince is come, that he was *cut off, but not for himself*, Dan. ix. 26; that he suffered, *the just for the unjust, to bring us to God*, 1 Pet. iii. 18; he *finished transgression, made an end of sin*; he *put it away*, by the *offering of himself*; he made *reconciliation for iniquity*, and *brought in an everlasting righteousness*. Dan. ix. 24.

As the doctrine of the cross is the glory of our religion, it is the foundation of all our hope: the apostle brings it in with a connexion, for, saith he in the former verse, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The consequent is inseparable, the argument invincible, and therefore his care is to let it be seen that the *antecedent* is true; to which purpose he offers the text in evidence: "He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

He had before observed, "That all things shall work together for our good," Rom. viii. 28, and now that all things shall be *given in* as our property. According to what he says in another place, "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, life or death, things present, or things to come, all is yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. The promise takes a large compass; as to the matter of our enjoyment, it reaches to *all things*; as to the way of it, it is *given freely*; he does it *liberally, and unbraideth not*, James i. 5; so that we are not straitened in God, either as to the work of his hand, or the design of his heart. As he is a "sun and shield, as he gives grace and glory, so



he withholds no good thing from those that walk uprightly," Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

And we are assured of what he *will do*, by what he *has done*. If there is any thing that he would have grudged, or held back, it must have been the very mercy that he has bestowed already: but it is doing as much as can be, to give us *his own Son*; and it is impossible that any future grant should go higher; we may look upon what is past as a pledge of what is to come.

The doctrine of the text is, "That God spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all;" and the application we are allowed to make of it is as great and happy, as the truth itself dear and certain, that "he will with him freely give us all things."

It is the former of these that I would now consider; and cannot think upon any better way of doing it for expedition and plainness, than by making the parts of the text to be the plan of the sermon.

You find the apostle is speaking of the most high God, that he is *for us*: as David says, "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me," Psal. cxviii. 6; it is the argument that Christ himself has used, "The Lord God will help me, therefore I shall not be confounded: he is near that justifies me: who is he that will condemn me?" Isa. l. 8, 9. And thus the apostle concludes, that it signifies very little who is against us, seeing *God is for us*. Now, this he proves, from what he has done already.

1. He appointed *his own Son* to be the trustee, the security, the price and assurance of our salvation.

2. This he did to that extremity, as *not to spare him* from any torments that human nature was able to endure.

3. To all these sufferings there was a divine order: he *delivered* him up.

4. This was *for us all*, in our room and stead; he was punished, that we might have a way to escape; and therefore he might say to divine justice, as he did to those that apprehended him, "If ye seek me, let those go their way." John xviii. 8.

These are the plain and easy contents of the words, and they amount to this proposition, that

"All the troubles that Christ endured were, by a divine appointment, in the room of his people."

The blow which they deserved, fell upon him: it was thus ordained, it was thus received. "He was wounded for our transgressions: he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 5. What manner of love is this; to give us *so great a Person*, as God's own Son? To do it in *so dear a way*, as not to spare him; and that with *so kind a view*, that

it should not only be *to* us, but *for* us: these are things that deserve to be taken apart.

I. I begin with the *dignity of the gift*, the thing, the Person that God bestowed, and that was *his own Son*. He is so called, 1. By way of distinction from others. 2. By way of eminence in himself.

1st. It is a *distinguishing* title; you will find the name scattered abroad, as the whole family, both in heaven and earth, are called after him.

(1.) By *creation* we are all the children of God: "He has made us, and not we ourselves: we are the work of his hands, and the sheep of his pasture," Psal. c. 3. There is "one God our Father, of whom are all things, and we of him," 1 Cor. viii. 6. This is the doctrine of nature; the apostle spoke of it with an approbation at Athens, "as one of your own poets have said, We are his offspring," Acts xvii. 28.

(2.) *Angels* possess the name with a dignity above us, as they had an existence before us; for when he laid out the partition between the earth and water, when he set a compass upon the face of the deep, "the morning stars sang together, and all *the sons of God* shouted for joy." Job xxxviii. 7.

(3.) He has sometimes bestowed the name upon *magistrates*, principalities, and powers: "I have said ye are gods, and all of you children of the Most High," Psal. lxxxii. 6, but very often we find, among *the basest of men*, Dan. iv. 17, those whom he sets over the kingdoms of the earth, where it cannot signify any thing that is either great or good.

(4.) He gave the title to the *Jews*, and did it by way of distinction: thus he directs Moses to tell Pharaoh; "Israel is my son, and my first-born; let my son go that he may serve me:" thus he upbraids them, when they proved a "foolish people, and unwise, and very ill requited the Lord, who was their Father that had bought them," Deut. xxxii. 6, that is, he had made and established them. It is in these terms he proclaims their return; "I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born," Jer. xxxi. 9. Nor was this a new thing in the earth; for before the flood he was pleased, in that very way, to separate one part of the world from the other: as we are told, *The sons of God*, the race that called upon the name of the Lord, *saw the daughters of men*, by which they *defiled their separation*, Gen. vi. 2.

(5.) He has children by *sanctification*; "to them he gives *power* or *authority* to become the sons of God; being born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. These are renewed in *the image of him*, who created them: he is a witness to the work of which he is the author, that they are "children and heirs of God," Rom. viii. 16, 17. With this principle he tries them, and by that he owns them, saying, "Touch no unclean thing, and I will be a

Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty," 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

(6) He bestows the title upon them by way of *adoption*. "In the place where it was said to them, ye are not my people, there they shall be called the children of the living God," Hos. i. 10. Rom. ix. 25, 26. "We are predestinated to the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ; and the spirit of adoption in our hearts is to make us cry, Abba, Father," Eph. i. 5, Rom. viii. 15.

(7.) With this name they are carried up to *heaven*: He brings "many sons to glory," Heb. ii. 10. Upon this head, "Christ and the Father are one," John x. 30, they both speak the same language. It is proclaimed upon the saints' arrival there, "he that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be a God to him, and he shall be my son," Rev. xxi. 7. Thus he speaks of the whole number, "Behold, here am I, and the children whom God has given me," Heb. ii. 13.

With this variety is the name diffused and distributed quite through the Bible: but there is never any danger of misapplying it; for the term, *his own Son*, is plainly distinguished from every one of them; that belongs to none but Christ: He has, indeed, a name *above every name*; and though the word may be given about at large, yet there is a sense in it peculiar to him; he has it all to himself. "Of his own will he begat us by the word of truth," James i. 18, and yet he is "the only begotten of the Father," John i. 18: though he brings *many sons* to glory, yet, as we are told in the parable, he has *only one Son*, and *his well beloved*.

2dly. When God calls him his *own Son*, it is by way of *eminence*. This was the Father's decree, this was our Lord's declaration, that he said unto him, "Thou art my Son," Psal. ii. 7. And the apostle looks upon it as a title that reaches above every creature; for "to which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee?" Heb. i. 5. It signifies that in him, which it never did, and never can do, in any other; and you may take it to be comprehensive of these four things; 1. Equality of nature. 2. Perpetuity of delight. 3. Unity of counsel. 4. Communion of glory.

1. The term, *his own Son*, can import no less than an *equality in nature*. It does so every where: "All nations of men are of one blood," Acts xvii. 26. "Adam begat a son in his own image, and his own likeness," Gen. v. 3, altogether such a one as himself. Nature is the same in a child, as it is in the fulness of stature; the measure of a perfect man in a beggar and a prince, in a fool and a philosopher, in sickness or in health. It is for this reason that Christ is so often called "the Son of man;" he seems to use it with pleasure and frequency, that we may understand by it, that he was really, as we are, "made of a woman," Gal. iv. 4, and in all things "like unto his brethren: for-

asmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same," Heb. ii. 14, 17.

And if being called the *Son of man* does prove the *human* nature, the *Son of God* must of necessity signify in him the *divine*. The derivation of a son from a father, makes a precedence and dependence, according to the train that God has laid before us, but still it leaves the *nature* the same in both: but as all derivation is to be thrown out when we speak of God, so the title belongs to none but "him, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist," Col. i. 17. Nor has Christ a claim to it, but upon the same perfections with the Father; that he is "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end," Rev. i. 8, and therefore though he is a Son, yet the name whereby he shall be called, is "the mighty God, the everlasting Father," Isa. ix. 6. The words are used in a promiscuous language, as meaning the same thing: "We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God, and eternal life," 1 John v. 20.

The Jews would never have been offended, had he taken the title with those limitations, that several in our day have put upon it: "But they sought to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God," John v. 18. He said that *God was his own Father*; and he says not one word to show them that they had mistaken him. He leaves them possessed of their notion, as a very right one, that the *Son of God was equal with God*: they knew his words imported this much, "I and my Father are one;" upon which they aver, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; because that thou being a man, makest thyself God," John x. 30, 33, 37, 38, though he never said any more than that he was the *Son of God*: and, as a proof of that, he appeals to *the works of his Father*. They are so called, not merely because the Father had given him them to do, but as they were works which none beside the Father could do, such as required an almighty arm; "the Father that is in me, he does the works; and I do them, that ye may believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me."

2. This title, *his own Son*, signifies a *perpetuity of love*: thus he speaks in the name of wisdom, (as being the *wisdom of God*, and the *power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24.) "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old: I was set up from everlasting; from the beginning, or ever the earth was; then was I by him, as one brought up with him, daily his delight, and rejoicing always before him." Prov. viii. 22, 23, 24, &c. He speaks very often concerning an unity of nature, and yet with a plain distinction of persons.

He is called *the only begotten*, who lies *in the bosom of the Father*, John i. 18. This was the witness given to him; he had it at his *baptism* in a voice from heaven; "~~This~~ is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Mat. iii. 17. It was repeated in the "holy mount, when the voice came again from the excellent glory," 2 Pet. i. 17, 18, as if when the Father bare witness of him, it would be in no other language than he had used before, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This he knew quite through the course of life: "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone, because I do always the things that please him," John viii. 29, and therefore though there are many thousands *beloved of God, his elect in whom his soul delighted*, Mat. xii. 18, yet not as he is: so that when we are said to be *accepted*, it is *in him*, as *the beloved*, Eph. i. 6. He alone is the *chosen of God and precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 4, we are *translated into the kingdom of this dear Son*, Col. i. 13.

These characters are included in the title, and ought to be remembered; when we come to consider that he *gave him up for us all*; not a servant, but *a Son*; not a rebel, a son that causeth shame, but one who was *his delight*; "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his own subsistence," Heb. i. 3.

3. It signifies an *unity of counsel*. Now, as none has understood "the mind of the Lord," Rom. xi. 34; there is "none with whom he took counsel," Isa. xl. 13; he "put no trust in his saints, and charged his angels with folly," Job xi. 18; so how great a name is that by which the *child born* to us is called, *Wonderful Counsellor*? Isa. ix. 6. He maintains it, and repeats it, even after the Jews had resolved to batter him with stones, for making himself equal with God. He goes on to assert this equality, that the Son can "do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do," John v. 19, 20. The words, *doing nothing of himself*, are not a diminution; the meaning is, that there is a perpetual and an equal concord between them: and it might have been said as truly of the Father, that he can do nothing of himself: for, "whatever things the Father does, these does the Son likewise;" for the Father loves the Son, and *shows him all things* that himself does; whereas, had there been an inequality, it might have been said in that empire, that the heart of the king is unsearchable; but as the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," 1 Cor. ii. 10, so the Son *knows all* that is in the Deity. That must be an infinite mind that is equal to an infinite nature; "No man knows who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son," Mat. xi. 27.

And is it not a wonder that he should part with *him*, and

give *him* up for us all, with whom he took counsel? It is plain, that the redemption that he came *for*, and the sufferings that he came *to*, were agreed on in "the counsel of peace between them both," Zech. vi. 13.

4. The title, *his own Son*, signifies a *communion of glory*. We may say to him, as we do to the Father, "thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." There is nothing like an excepting clause in all his commission, such an one as Pharaoh gave Joseph; "according to thy word, shall all my people be ruled, and be thou over the land of Egypt; only in the throne will I be greater than thou," Gen. xii. 40. Instead of that, he speaks of a "glory that he had with the Father before the world was." This he promises, this he demands: it was *his will*, that "they whom the Father had given him, should be with him where he was, that they might behold the glory which the Father had given him; for, saith he, thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," John xvii. 24, 25. Though the highest insolence of Lucifer was, that he "set his throne as the throne of God," Isa. xiv. 12, yet, without any inequality, we read that "the throne of God, and of the Lamb, is in heaven, and his servants shall serve him," Rev. xxi. 1, 2, 3. And as they upon mount Sion have their Father's name in their foreheads, there is as much said of the Son that they shall see *his face*, and *his name* shall be in their foreheads.

This is he whom God has given for us, *the Lord of glory*, James ii. 1. It is brought in as a noble aggravation of what he endured, that when "he was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God; he made himself of no reputation, and being found in fashion as a man, took on him the form of a servant, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 6.

These are things that I believe to be included within the glorious title of *God's own Son*: and we ought to keep them in remembrance, on purpose to see the greatness of the love that gave him for us, and say with the apostle, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift," 2 Cor. ix. 15.

II. We read of this wonderful person that God did *not spare him*; which signifies the greatness, the extremity of his troubles. The phrase is full and strong, and carries in it a vast meaning; he submitted to the utmost anguish and bitterness. You will understand the word, as you do when it is used in a case that is opposite, "I will spare them in the day that I make up my jewels, as a man spares his own son that serves him," Mal. iii. 17. God's sparing his people then, when he is putting them among his jewels, when they are strung together in the glories of a common salvation, means every thing that can enter into their happiness. We may all know and feel the sense of the comparison, that though a father's love to a son that serves him,

is called no more than *sparing him*, yet who does not see what a length it reaches; that it comprehends a fulness of delight, a recompense of reward, a confidence, a satisfaction, an open heart and treasure?

Well, in proportion to such an affection as you believe to be contained in a man's sparing his own son, and God's sparing his people when they go to heaven, are we to take these words, in this other application, that he *spared not* his own Son, *i. e.* he neither hid him from the punishment, nor excused him any particular share in it; he made not the least abatement of what was owing to the guilt of those that he suffered for; "he trod the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," Rev. xix. 15. This you may apply to the six following particulars, viz.

1. His continual meanness. 2. His pains and bodily sufferings. 3. The horror of darkness that came upon his soul. 4. The weight of the law that he was subject to. 5. The scandal of his death. 6. The particular energy that the Father himself gave to all these troubles. There was no abatement in any of them; he drank the last dregs of the cup; not a drop was left or spilt upon the ground.

(1.) You see that God did not spare him from the perpetual *meanness* of his life. As soon as he was "made of a woman, he made himself of no reputation," Gal. iv. 4; he came *empty* into the world, Phil. ii. 7, though in him dwelt all *the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. He was to come of the race of their kings, and was "raised up as an horn of salvation in the house of his servant David," Luke i. 69; but this must be at the time when "the tabernacle of David was fallen," Acts xv. 16, as if God had cast off and abhorred, and been *wroth with his anointed*, Psal. lxxxix. 38, 39, 40. He had made void the covenant of his servant, and *profaned his crown*: he had made his glory to cease, and cast his throne to the ground. Bethlehem, the place of his birth, was become "little among the princes of Judah," Micah v. 2, Mat. ii. 11, and so crowded with the noble branches of the family, that when "she brought forth her first-born child, she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn," Luke ii. 7.

What a *glory* was it that opened the tidings to the shepherds, Luke ii. 9, when they themselves were within a circle of light from heaven! Here is a wall of fire round about them; and no wonder, when the great glory was come in the midst of them? To hear the angels preaching the everlasting gospel, telling them "tidings of great joy, that to them was born that day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord;" every word sounded the magnificence of this *great thing* that came to pass. And in the same breath to be told, that instead of "seeing the Lord of glory, the Prince of the kings of the earth,"

they should see a *child wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger*; this made the narration the most unequal and disproportioned that ever was in the world.

In his youth after he had astonished the *doctors* of Jerusalem, he goes down, and was *subject* to his *parents* at Nazareth; as if he was determined to quench the *light of Israel*, Luke ii. 47, 51.

And as his *fame* increased, so did his *reproach*; as he complains in prophecy, "reproach has broken my heart, I am full of heaviness," Psal. lxxix. 20, upon which they "hid their faces from him, they despised and esteemed him not," Isa. liii. 3. Though he was "the branch of the Lord, beautiful and glorious," Isa. iv. 2, yet he came as a "root out of a dry ground;" all they who were looking for him "saw no comeliness in him; he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," Isa. liii. 4.

He who was to have "the government upon his shoulders," Isa. vi. 7, had not "where to lay his head," Luke ix. 5; "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor," 2 Cor. viii. 9. He lived upon the voluntary contribution of his hearers; "they ministered to him of their substance," Luke viii. 3. Though the great men from the east "brought him presents, gold, frankincense, and myrrh," as the first fruits of a glorious empire, Mat. ii. 11, yet the *King of kings* is a *servant of rulers*, Isa. xlix. 7, and the *desire of all nations* is one whom his *own nation abhors*, Hag. ii. 7. Though "the kings of Sheba and Seba would offer gifts," Psal. lxxii. 10, yet he cannot pay his tribute-money till he sends for it out of a fish's mouth, Mat. xvii. 27.

(2.) You may refer this to his *bodily pains* and sufferings. He who was "fairer than the sons of men," Psal. xlv. 2, has his "visage marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," Isa. lii. 14. "He whose countenance is now as the sun, when it shines in all its strength," Rev. i. 16, "hid not his face from shame and spitting," Isa. l. 6; and though the time will come that from "his countenance the heaven and the earth shall flee away," Rev. xx. 11, yet they *covered his face* and *smote him*, John iv. 6.

He knew the meaning of hunger and thirst, of cruel mockings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments: he was scourged as a malefactor, had a crown of thorns platted upon his head: "greedy dogs came against him, they pierced his hands and his feet: his bones were all out of joint; his heart like wax melted in the midst of his bowels: they gave him gall for his meat, and in his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink," Psal. xxii. 16. A *body* seems to be *prepared for him*, Heb. x. 5, that he might "bear our sins in his body on the tree," 1 Pet. ii. 24, so that we see him racked and torn; no "sound-



ness in his flesh, because of God's anger," Psal. xxxviii. 3. This is he that "came by water and blood," 1 John v. 6, for they "pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water," John xix. 34.

(3.) He had a horror of *great darkness* upon his *soul*: which shows it to be no supernatural spirit, but of the very same nature with ours, capable of grief, and appointed to it. This he desires his disciples to observe and attend; "his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Mat. xxvi. 38, and therefore he orders them to watch. Grief in them was able to cheat itself, it sunk them to *sleep*: but it kept him awake, and "his sweat was like great drops of blood falling to the earth," Luke xxii. 44.

(4.) That which pressed him so much was the *weight* of the *law*. He was *made under the law*, Gal. iv. 4, and as it is said that such people are *under the curse*, Gal. iii. 10, it was the curse that we are redeemed from; for no man could, by any means, "redeem this our elder brother, or pay unto God a ransom for him," Psal. xlix. 7; no, "he paid himself a ransom for us," 1 Tim. ii. 6. "The righteousness of the law speaks in this wise, that the man who does these things shall live in them," Rom. x. 5; he did these things with perfection and purity, and yet nevertheless the law that was ordained to *life*, was to him a sentence of *death*: for though obedience and punishment were divided, so that no person could have both, yet in him they are united: here is a *righteous servant*, Eccl. viii. 14, to whom it happens, according to the work of the wicked; for upon *him* was *laid the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6.

(5.) The *scandal* of his *death*. God had said to the Jews, "Cursed is every one that is hanged on a tree," Deut. xxi. 23, Gal. iii. 10. The Romans had no such tradition; and therefore he could never have suffered but in this *due time*, Rom. v. 6, that *the sceptre was departed from Judah*, Gen. xlix. 10. The Romans would never have found him guilty of such a crime; the Jews would never have inflicted such a punishment; but he is to be delivered to the Gentiles. Pilate had a mind to be clear of it, and therefore throws it all out of his hands: "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." The Jews therefore said unto him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death, that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, signifying what death he should die," John xviii. 31, 32. He told them plainly after this, "Take ye him, and crucify him; I find no fault in him;" upon which they reply, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God," John xix. 4.

Blasphemy is his sin, which none but the Jews would have called so: crucifixion is his punishment, which none but the Romans would have made so; and therefore it is thus ordered,

that the "heathen shall rage at the same time that the people imagined a vain thing," Psal. ii. 1: and that he might, in every sense of the word, be *a curse for us*, he is to have it not only from the moral law, but from the ceremonial. They took him, and *hanged him on a tree*, Acts v. 30, and therefore it is said, when *he endured the cross, he despised the shame*, Heb. xiii. 2.

(6.) That which is principally to be minded, is the particular *energy* that the Father gave to all these troubles; even this was *the doing of the Lord*. The Jews took him to be *stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*, Isa. liii. 4. They argued as David foretold they would, "Let us persecute and take him, because God has forsaken him." All the varieties of trouble that seized him were under a divine appointment. He who settles the bounds of our habitation, provided none for him, he chastened him, and gave him over to death. The Lord God "wakened and opened his ear, morning by morning, that he might give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair," Isa. l. 4, 5, 6.

He begs of the Father, like one who had "learned obedience by the things that he suffered," Heb. v. 8, "all things are possible to thee, let this cup pass from me; and, if it may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done;" Mat. xxvi. 39. Well, it was his will, the cup which the Father had given him to drink. There was nothing that looked like sparing a Son that serves him. The law was *in* his heart, and we may say it went *to* his heart; he felt it there, which made his heart faint within him.

Though he was offered as a sacrifice of a *sweet smelling savour*, Eph. v. 2, yet who would have thought so, when he pleads and groans, and cries, and argues under his burden, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mat. xxvii. 46. "Why art thou so far from the voice of my roaring?" Psal. xxii. 1.

This was so evident, that they insult him upon it; "Let us see, say they, whether Elias will come to take him down." Mark xv. 36. Elias met him in the mount of transfiguration, and there *spake of his decease at Jerusalem*, Mat. xvii. 6, but he could do nothing to *prevent it*, Luke ix. 31. He foretold on mount Tabor, what happened on Calvary. It was still more daring to say, "Let God deliver him, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God."

Upon the whole, you see the truth and propriety of those astonishing words, that "it pleased the Father to bruise him, and put him to grief;" Isa. liii. 10. I will not say it was threatened, but it was designed, when God proclaimed, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow; smite the shepherd;" Zech. xiii. 7. There could never be a greater occasion to plead, as the prophet does, Jer. xlvii. 6, 7; "O thou sword

of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into the scabbard, rest, and be still." But the answer was ready, How can it be quiet, when the *Lord hath given it such a charge*, and has so appointed it? For, as he spared him not, it was he who *delivered him up*.

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## SERMON II.

ROMANS viii. 32.—He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

THE apostle takes care to let us know that there was a *divine appointment* of all the sorrows and grief with which our Lord became acquainted. "He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father," Gal. i. 4.

That second causes had their share and their guilt, is true: the envy of the priests, the rage of the heathen, the jealousy of the rulers, the superstition of the rabble, the influence of Satan, the avarice of Judas, Mat. xxvii. 18, these are placed as an over-ruling providence ordained or permitted them. But still there was a supreme guiding cause, that quickened the movement, and turned the wheels.

What *He* did, was holy, just, and good. The malignity of the several creatures obeyed his will, without polluting it: to them it was a scene of wickedness, the lust of the flesh and of the mind: malice, pride, and envy, were so many *snares of the devil*, by which he led them captive, and in that view the *crucifying of the Lord of glory*, was the greatest impiety that ever human nature ran into: but take it as a model, laid by an all-comprehending mind, an *understanding that is infinite*, Psal. cxlvii. 5, and we may say, here was a train of the best *means*, in order to accomplish the greatest *end*.

Never did the divine *goodness* appear in a nobler design; never did the divine *wisdom* shine out in a better method; never was any thing more *becoming* him, "of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, than in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect, through his sufferings," Heb. ii. 10.

The Scripture has taken a great deal of care to keep this in view, quite through the story of Jesus Christ, and him crucified; that nothing happened to him, but in pursuance of a counsel and purpose, that was moved and agreed to before the world began; and therefore it is spoken of in my text, as the *doing of the Lord*.

Had we been told of the *priests*, who drew up the charge, and stirred up the people, that *they* spared him not; had this

been said of those that reviled him, that cut him with thorns, or nails, or spears, we could easily have understood it: had the apostle told us, that *he was delivered up*, Acts iii. 13, by his countrymen, to Pilate, and by him back again to them, the phrase would have stood without any mystery: but when we read of his being humbled and grieved, neglected and wounded, and all this said of *the Father*, that thus used his *own Son*, that he did not spare him, that he *delivered him up*, it is a thing that man's wisdom can neither give nor take; and therefore the Holy Spirit has been very abundant to carry this quite through the Bible, as you will see by a long train of particulars.

1. It was agreed on in the counsel between the Father and the Son.

2. It was foretold in the very dawning of the love and kindness that appeared towards men.

3. It was designed in the whole frame of devotion, which God appointed among his people.

4. To this I may add, that these shadows were discharged and abolished, as soon as ever the thing signified was accomplished.

5. It is what the prophets in their several ages gave a lineal witness to.

6. It is a thing of which Christ himself was apprised, and to which he consented.

7. It is what the human nature was prepared and disposed for.

8. This he kept off, till the time appointed for it came, to show that it was always in his power to prevent it.

9. Then he went out to meet it, and received it not only with submission, but obedience.

10. There is to be an eternal memorial of it in heaven; which shows that the design was *laid* in the place where it is to be *admired*.

I have thrown these things into the order and situation that the word of God has given them; and I doubt not that they will let us see that we ought to look a great deal higher than to the powers of darkness in the sufferings of Christ. That it was not merely the push of envy, the produce of malice, treachery, deceit, and murder, but it is to be considered as his own obedience to death, even the death of the cross. It was also the Father's appointment, what he demanded in law, and what he delighted in, as God only wise, who is blessed for ever; according to the apostle's distinction, when he argues with the Jews; "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," Acts ii. 23.

*First*, He observes *their action* in the whole gradation; *they* took him, and crucified him, and slew him. *Secondly*, They did it *by wicked hands*, and wicked hearts: he could never afford them any better name than *betrayers and murderers*, Acts vii.

52, and yet, *Thirdly*, The person thus used was *delivered*, given up, surrendered, and appointed to the self same lot. *Fourthly*, This was by *the foreknowledge of God*; he could tell that so it would be: Nay, *Fifthly*, It is by his *determinate counsel*, what he had framed and fixed, and brought into a certain sphere, that it should *most surely come to pass*.

1. We may say, with the scriptures of truth, that the sufferings of Christ were *agreed* on between the Father and the Son. Indeed, this is *the secret of the Lord*, and among his *invisible things*, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 18, nor could we ever have known them, had they not been revealed to us by his Spirit, as now they are.

We are expressly told, that Christ, as *a branch*, should *grow up* out of his place, Zech. vi. 12, and this we know to be out of *a dry ground*, Isa. liii. 2; and though he was to *build the temple of the Lord*, yet the temple of his body is to be destroyed, in order to it, John ii. 19. He should, indeed, *bear the glory*, but before that he must *bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows*, Isa. liii. 4, and though he should *sit upon his throne*, he is there as *a Priest*, as one who has *somewhat to offer*; and all this scheme of humiliation and trouble flows from *the counsel of peace* that was between them both.

It was "the pleasure of the Lord that prospered in his hand," Isa. liii. 10, not only what the Lord pleased to appoint, but the very thing *in which his soul delighted*; the darling project, the favourite article, *the chief of the ways of God*, which he *magnified above all his name*, Psal. cxxxviii. 2. There was a model of glory laid, that would both outshine the creation, and outlast it: it will hold when "the first heaven and the first earth are passed away," Rev. xxi. 1. When he has rubbed out all the figures of Deity, that are engraven upon the universe, he reserves a memorial that shall endure for ever, and that is in the redemption that he has purchased.

Here are a people to be saved who are sold; and, therefore, to make his love triumphant, they are *bought with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 19. The person who pays it is the Son of God; the thing that he lays down for it is *his precious blood*, 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. To this he was verily *foreordained* before the foundation of the world, though not manifest till these last times. This does not only signify that the happiness we have in him, was then contrived, but the means of bringing it about were then appointed, and that was the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; so that it may be said of all his troubles, they are the birth of an eternal purpose, the decree brought forth.

The disciples knew how to consider the design of God, and the malignity of men, without any jumble or confusion; they work together, and yet are greatly distinct; things are called by their proper names. Here is "the rage of the heathen, the vain

imaginations of the people, the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, with the people of Israel, of a truth, had gathered together against the holy child Jesus; but it was to do what God's own hand and counsel had determined before to be done." Acts iv. 25—28. He was not the author of their sin, though they were the tools of his pleasure. We read here, that the *determination* is attributed both to his *hand* and his *counsel*: as if it was not a dead scheme, a thing laid for a peradventure, what *may* happen, or may not; but the decree was quickened, full of life, and would certainly, after the leisure of many ages, produce what it contrived.

You will suppose that this includes the concurrence of both parties; and it lets us see, that whatever is done, is the effect of a plan that God has *purposed in himself*: for when the world was framing, and the Redeemer, who was "daily his delight, rejoiced always before him," even then he is said to rejoice in "the habitable parts of the earth, and have his delights among the sons of men," Prov. viii. 30, 31, and the argument we have of his delight in them, is the way he took to show it; "The good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep," John x. 11.

2. The sufferings of Christ were *foretold* in the very dawn of the love and kindness of God our Saviour towards man; he acted upon our recovery, as he did upon the creation. When Adam and Eve had fallen, the human nature was "without form and void, and darkness lay upon the face of the deep:" till he broke silence with that great voice, *Let there be light*: he was pleased to visit them, as they sat in the region and shadow of death; there he *brought life and immortality* to its first light, 2 Tim. i. 10, and that was the morning of our gospel. They were then assured that the serpent should be *bruised* in the head, Gen. iii. 15, crushed and mashed in pieces; that is, in the gospel style, *The prince of this world shall be judged*, John xvi. 11. But the way of doing it, is making the conqueror *the seed of the woman*, and suffering the enemy to *bruise his heel*. That these expressions denote the human nature of Christ, and his troubles in it, is above all dispute; so that,

The first doctrine revealed to Adam was a *redemption through the blood of Jesus*, Col. i. 14. That he should be *made of a woman*, to be made *under the law*, Gal. iv. 4, and being under the law, was *under the curse*, Gal. iii. 10. This is the current article, the thing most in view quite through the Old and New Testament; that he verily should be partaker of flesh and blood, as all the children were, that "*through death*, he might subdue him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. ii. 14. We may extend the apostle's observation, and take it in a wider circumference; as he says, "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith,

preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," Gal. iii. 8. The truth is the same, after you have stretched it out as it was designed; that as the *justification* of sinners should be through a *faith* in Jesus, even a faith *in his blood*, God preached before the gospel to Adam and Eve, saying, "in her seed all the families of the earth should be blessed."

It was by faith in this that *Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*, Heb. xi. 4, something that was more a sacrifice, that better agreed to the nature and design of it. As it was managed in a way of slaughter, it had respect to him, who is called, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." By this he obtained witness that he was righteous; not by this faith, but by the *sacrifice*; for though the grammatical construction agrees to either of them, yet I rather choose this interpretation, because there is particular notice taken, that God testified of *his gifts*.

They all knew here was "a hope set before them," Heb. vi. 18, that God was gracious in the remission of sins; and they looked to the great atonement, as "the reason of the hope that was in them." So early did God "set him forth, fore-ordained him to be a propitiation for our sins, through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. The apostle says no other thing than Moses, in the law, and the prophets *did write*, Acts xxvi. 22, nay, the very same that Adam, Abel, Enoch, and all they who *walked with God*, believed and owned in their generations; that his own Son should be delivered up for us all: it was a doctrine that opened to them with the very eyelids of the morning. This has its place among "the first principles of the oracles of God," Heb. v. 12, and in this sense we may truly say, Christianity is as old as the creation.

3. These sufferings of Christ were *figured out* in the whole frame of that devotion, which God appointed among his people. Their religion before the flood had the light of revelation to guide it. As they *offered by faith*, as they *walked before God*, it proved them to be reconciled: for "how should two walk together except they are agreed?" Amos iii. 3. Their sacrifices in so many forms were an argument how much they believed that "without the shedding of blood, there could be no remission;" and this must carry their thoughts to him, who was to redeem us "in the body of his flesh through death," Heb. ix. 22.

But these rules came to be more digested and multiplied: when he took the seed of Abraham into covenant with him, he gave them circumcision, as a seal of the *righteousness of that faith*, Rom. iv. 11, which they had. When they were uncircumcised, they built their *altars*, as so many types of that altar that *sanctifies every gift*, 1 Cor. v. 7. They had their Paschal

Lamb, as a pledge of "Christ our Passover, who is sacrificed for us," Psal. li. *ult.* There was the blood of bulls and goats, whole burnt-offerings, their incense and perfumes all thrown into the same devotions, in hopes of him who has "given himself for us, a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour," Eph. v. 2. They instantly *served God day and night*, Acts xxvi. 7, they did it with a *fervency*, an *intenseness*, and a rest of thought upon *the great hope of Israel*.

Now, to what purpose should God lead a peculiar people to devotions that required a large expense of time and cost, but only to put them in mind of him, who is "a High-priest of good things to come," Heb. ix. 11, 12, and who, "by his own blood should enter into the holiest of all, having obtained eternal redemption for us:" so that Judaism was only Christianity in figures, and shadows of good things to come.

4. I must add to this head, that which still gives more light and force to the argument, that these shadows are *discharged* and *abolished* upon the death of Christ. This proves, that as we are never to have them at all, so the Jews had them, not for the sake of the things themselves, but the Holy Ghost signified, that the "way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest," Heb. ix. 8. For had there been any virtue in them, "they would not have ceased to be offered," Heb. x. 2. But the New Testament speaks of them with contempt, as the Old one did with veneration. They are called "weak and beggarly elements, carnal ordinances," Gal. iv. 9, and an obedience to them is "being in bondage," Heb. x. 10.

What is the reason that the service of God, which was once a *glory*, should be now a *shame*? Rom. ix. 3. The apostle has plainly told us, that "what was made glorious has no glory, by reason of a glory that excels," 2 Cor. iii. 10. The whole prediction of these typical duties is answered: they were but patterns of things in the heavens; ours are *the heavenly things themselves*, Heb. ix. 23. *The body is Christ*, Col. ii. 17. He has done in *one offering*, Heb. x. 10—12, what they could only give us so many draughts of in a thousand. This proves there was a double end to be answered in the crucifixion of our Lord; first to *accomplish* the service of the temple; and, secondly to *abolish* it: and therefore, there is no more occasion to bring oftentimes the same sacrifices; for "Christ has appeared in the end of the world, to put away sin by the offering of himself," Heb. ix. 25, 26. You may plainly see the blood of their slain beasts was *shed without the gate*, and *carried without the camp*, Heb. xiii. 11. This was afterwards brought within the veil, and upon the garments of the high-priest presented before the holiest of all. And thus is Christ gone, not with the blood of others, but *his own*; not into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself.



They had it as their distinction from all other people, that as "of them Christ was to come," Rom. ix. 5, so among them he was to be well known: but "the veil is rent, and the middle wall of partition broken down," Mat. xxviii. 51, and he did this by dying: "He abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, of twain making one new man," Eph. ii. 13, 14. This could never be done without his death: for all the ceremonial law was in full force, till "the seed came to whom the promise was made," Gal. ii. 19, and the thing was over to which those figures had their allusion.

This proves that his humiliation, from the birth to the grave, from the manger to the cross, was all laid and contrived. "The Son of man went, as it was written of him," Mat. xxvi. 24. It was not a start of second causes, an event that bubbled out unawares; but foreseen, foretold, and fore-ordained. And though what he died for was not the *righteousness of the law*, yet it is a righteousness to which "both the law and the prophets gave witness," Rom. iii. 22. All their devotion was a shadow of good *things to come*, Heb. x. 1, and therefore could "make nothing perfect, as the bringing in of a better hope did; by which we now draw nigh unto God," chap. vii. 18, 19. You see by these two particulars, that God ever brought up his people in the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin, and in the knowledge of that remission by the blood of the cross: because almost all things under the law are *purged with blood*, Rom. ix. 22, and why did they so often meet with it, but to keep their faith alive in this great article of a satisfaction to his justice?

It is what the *prophets*, in their several ages, gave a lineal *witness* to; prophecy was nothing but revelation retailed and dealt out in parcels: "holy men of God spake as they were moved," 2 Pet. i. 20, 21, blown about and carried, directed and appointed, borne and upheld by the Holy Ghost. What God at first declared with his own mouth, afterwards he distributed through earthen vessels, at "sundry times, and in divers manners," Heb. i. 1. And as the first and greatest thing that ever he had to tell mankind, was redeeming love, so the light he gave to every prophet was kindled at *that*. Whatever he said about their duties, their sins, their captivity, and deliverance, were so many lines stretching, pointing, and centring here. As the apostle Peter tells us, that the prophets who inquired and searched into "our salvation, spake of the grace that is come to us," 1 Pet. i. 10, 11. It was the Spirit of Christ in them that testified the two main things, "the sufferings of Christ," and "the glory that should follow;" and it was revealed to them, that not to themselves but *to us* they did minister; they insisted upon things that are now *reported among us*.

Peter declared this to the Jews, at the time that he set him-

self to convince them of their sin: "They had delivered up, and denied the holy and just One, and killed the prince of life," Acts iii. 13, 14, but he would have them know, that *God delivered him up too*, Acts iii. 17, 18. "For," says he, brethren, "through ignorance you did it; but those things that God before had shown by the mouth of *all his prophets*, that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled:" It is a large compass that he takes in his affirmation, to make it the doctrine of *all the prophets*; and yet you find he does not flinch from what he had said, but tells them over again, "that all the prophets from Samuel, and those that followed after, have foretold of these days," ver. 24.

David speaks concerning him, that "his soul was not left in hell," Acts ii. 25, which intimates that it was laid there; that his sufferings were of such a nature as to be thus expressed. When our Lord opened the Scriptures to the disciples, who were going to Emmaus, he did it out of the law of Moses and the Prophets, and the book of Psalms, Luke xxiv. 45, 46, proving from all of them, that Christ "must needs have suffered," Acts xvii. 3, and entered into his glory; that it behoved him, he could not do otherwise.

It is plain from the established songs of Zion, that our praises are owing to "the Lamb that was slain," Rev. v. 9. He was to be "poor and needy before the Lord set him up on high," Psal. lxi. 29. It was by the mouth of his servant David he said "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but *mine ear hast thou opened*," Psal. xl. 6, or, *mine ear hast thou bored*; that is, I am set out and marked to be thy servant for ever: I have got the perpetual badge. The equivalent to this phrase in the New Testament is, "a body hast thou prepared me," Heb. x. 5, 6. And by matching the one of these to the other, we see that with "the fashion of a man" he took on him "the form of a servant:" Phil. ii. 7, 8, preparing him a body, was boring his ear; he had it on purpose to "learn obedience by the things that he suffered," Heb. v. 7.

David also speaks of his "drinking of the brook in the way," Psal. cx. 7. Our poetical translator makes no more of it, than that he should stoop to mean refreshments; which is, I think, a mean exposition, and carries but a mean refreshment in it to the faith of God's people: it is plainly a local phrase; and relates to the sorrows in which he passed over the brook Kidron; the place that had been so bitter to David, when he fled from Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 23, and should be so to Christ, when he was falling into the hands of Judas.

Isaiah did not only "see his glory," John xii. 11, but his "sufferings, and spake of them;" that in his humiliation "he was taken away; he was oppressed and afflicted, brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth: He was taken from prison

and judgment; cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of my people was he stricken; my righteous servant shall justify many; *for* he shall bear their iniquities: he poured out his soul to death, he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," Isa. liii. 3—8.

Daniel tells us plainly, that "the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself; that in the midst of the week he shall die," Dan. ix. 26. Zechariah speaks of the sword drawn against "one who is God's fellow," Zech. xiii. 7, the same thing that the apostle says; that "being in the form of God, he became obedient to death," Phil. ii. 6, 7. He is express upon this head, that "they shall look on him whom they have pierced," Zech. xii. 10. And what shall I more say? the time would fail me, to speak of all those who have been preachers of the righteousness that is by faith. It was in accomplishment of this design that one of the soldiers "run a spear into his side, and forthwith came out blood and water," John xix. 34.

6. It is the thing that Christ himself was *apprised* of, and *consented* to. "Lo, I come, saith he; in the volume of the book it is written of me." The apostle has a great remark upon the connexion of these words; "That above, when he had said, Sacrifice and burnt-offering for sin, thou wouldest not; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God; he takes away the first, that he may establish the second," Heb. x. 7—10, that is the first appointment of sacrifice and burnt-offering, that he may establish the second, his own designation to slaughter; and "by this will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus, once for all:" as if this was the main will of God, the things that he insisted on, and to which our blessed Saviour paid his homage at last; when he said, "Not my will, but thine be done." He became incarnate that he might become obedient, as will appear from the next head.

7. The human nature of Christ was *prepared* and *disposed* for these sufferings: his whole life was cast into such a mould of providence, that from the beginning to the end, he was to be "despised and rejected of men," Isa. liii. 2. As David knew, that of the fruit of his loins, "God would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," Acts ii. 30, so we should think the son of David would array himself with glory and majesty, and cast abroad his eyes upon every one that is proud, and abase him; but instead of that, he seems to have no relation to David's throne, but rather to "all his afflictions;" a "reproach to his acquaintance," and a "shaking of the head to all the people," Psal. cxxxii. 1.

He conversed with places where they gave him no respect; he chose to live as a prophet "without honour, in his own country," Luke iv. 24. He came from Nazareth, out of which no *good thing* was ever supposed to come, John i. 46. He lived in Galilee, out of which there arose *no prophet*, chapter

vii. 52. Both his town and his country were of no repute. He asks water to drink of a Samaritan woman, John iv. 8, which any Jew besides himself would have thought a dishonour. He was so hungry, as to seek fruit on a fig-tree upon the road, and to go empty away: as if he had laid out for shame and grief, and determined, quite through his life, to make himself of "no reputation," Phil. ii. 7.

He had our nature in all the tender sensations. Reproach had *broken his heart*, by the contradiction of sinners against himself, Psal. lxi. 20. He was "sorrowful and sore vexed," Heb. xii. 3; his body was too weak to bear the cross; he falls under it, "fainting in the day of adversity, to show that his strength was small." He had nature in all its feeling; every power that was able to receive a torture, all the capacities of misery. Crucifixion might deaden the other two by degrees; the more they spent, the less they felt. But he died, as it were, in full life; and the moment he gave out a *loud voice*, he gave *up his spirit* too: so that, it is evident, he was made to be "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," Isa. liii. 4. Not a softening article in all the case, but the very dregs of wrath. There was no sorrow like to his sorrow.

8. He kept off his troubles till the *appointed time came*. Though I do not give you this as a full argument, yet you will easily see it opens the way to it. He had it always in his power to control or escape the whole wrath of man. When they took him to the brow of the hill, Luke iv. 29, on which the city was built, with a design to throw him down headlong, though he was upon the brink of ruin, he comes quietly away. When the officers went to take him, he tied their hands with what he said, John vii. 45, 46, and they who were to be rulers of his person, were captives to his speeches. When his enemies had worked themselves and the people into a common rage, he did by *that storm* as he did by others; he said *Peace, be still*, and it ceased in a moment. When great multitudes went out to take him, "no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come," John viii. 20.

The amount of the examples is what he tells us, that "no man can take away my life from me: I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again," chap. x. 18. And to this you may add, his assurance of help from above, if ever he desired it: but he gives it as the reason of his being so resigned, because it was of a divine appointment. Thus he argues with Peter; "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to the Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

9. These sufferings are what he *went out to meet*: he thought it his duty to do so. When he speaks of his being betrayed, forsaken, condemned and crucified; he says, "that the world

may know I love the Father; As the Father gave me commandment, so I do; arise, and let us go hence," John xiv. 31. It is under this control that he prays and cries, "Father, let this hour pass from me; nevertheless, for this cause came I to this hour," chap. xii. 26, that is, "There is nothing in this hour which I so dread, but what ought to be there. It is the enemies' hour, and the power of darkness, a day of darkness and gloominess, of clouds and thick darkness." The sun shrunk in, as if nature itself would do nothing to hinder the whole *power of darkness*. Yet in all this he only went as it was written of him; nor was there any thing that could be surprising to him, either unseen or unchosen. He submitted to it all. His last action was to *bow the head*, that he might die in the posture of a willing servant.

10. There is to be an *eternal memorial* of these things in heaven, which shows the design was *laid* in the *place*, where it shall be ever *admired*. The offence of the cross is ceased to them above: they are no more ashamed of it, than they are enemies to it, but weave it into all their praises. When they speak of Jesus, as the "faithful Witness, the Prince of the kings of the earth," you may say, "Holy and reverend is his name:" but they do not forget that he is the "first begotten from the dead;" and from that title there gushes out an adoration; "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever," Rev. i. 5, 6.

Thus the happy throng that are about him, from every part of the grand circle, give in their praises; "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," Rev. v. 9. Nay, the angels themselves, those morning stars, sing at our redemption, as they did at our creation; "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honour, power, strength, salvation, glory, and blessing," ver. 11, 12.

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### SERMON III.

ROMANS viii. 32.—He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

THE last thing to be considered in these words, is the *great end* upon which our Saviour became "obedient to death, even the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 6, and that by the appointment of the Father. *Why* did not God spare his own Son, but deliver him up? What design had he in a scheme so full of wonder, and so full of horror? What means the heat of this great

anger? Now, the text I am upon abounds with light as well as comfort; it was FOR US ALL.

There is no cloud upon the sentence: it is not to be numbered among the things that are *hard to be understood*, 2 Pet. iii. 16, and therefore why should any endeavour to pervert the words of peace and truth, which contain in them so much of *good will towards men*? Luke ii. 14; because there is nothing got by it. To deny the satisfaction that Christ has made, is a robbery upon God, and a murder to his people: it is destroying the "grace wherein we stand," Rom. v. 2.

That I am a sinner, is so true, that there is no pretence to doubt it; that by this God is angry, is a matter beyond all dispute; that without his favour I can have no hope of escaping the wrath to come, is very certain: now, it is not to be supposed that he will be gracious to me with any injury to himself; but, if I am saved, as it will be to the glory of his mercy, so there must be no dishonour upon any other attribute: therefore some way or other he must be "faithful and just to forgive us our sins," 1 John i. 9. He will be "well pleased for his righteousness' sake: he will magnify the law, and make it honourable," Isa. xlii. 21. It is not enough that there is "the forbearance of God in the remission of sins that are past," Rom. iii. 25, but "he declares his righteousness;" he declares, I say, *at this time*, in the moment of pardon, his righteousness, "that he may be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus."

And if this is to be the case, there is but one of these two ways for it, either by relaxing the punishment, and erasing what is threatened, or by insisting upon it, and executing the fierceness of his wrath. The former of these is so very inglorious to God, that it cannot be admitted without a suspicion of weakness. Men are oftentimes obliged to acts of grace, to reverse a sentence, and dismiss a criminal; and it is not so much an argument of their goodness, as of their imperfection. They could not in the making of their laws foresee the necessity there would be of dropping them; and in many cases, it is more their interest to release an offender, than it is to destroy him. They pardon because they cannot help it, and drop the terrors that they dare not execute: and so their laws are often repealed or dispensed with, and the penalties they declare are no more than the "blast of a terrible one," a mere "storm against a wall," Isa. xxv. 4.

But all these shuffling ways are dishonourable to him, who "is the rock, and his work is perfect; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he," Deut. xxxii. 4. If his law is what he will not execute, to what purpose did he give it? Either he foreknew the sentence would be discharged, or he did not. To say he did not, but that several things happen in the course of life that he could not foresee, is to deny that *his understanding is infinite*, Psal. cxlvii. 5; for, if *he is the Father*

*of lights*, he must be *without any variableness or shadow of turning*, James i. 17.

And then if he really knew that here was a threatening added that would never be accomplished, why should so rash a word come out of his mouth? That be far from the *Judge of all the earth*, Gen. xviii. 25, to trifle with his creatures; or to make the terrible things that he says in righteousness, a great noise about nothing. *The Lord is righteous*, Psal. lxxv. 5, both in giving the command, and in taking vengeance: it is ever true of our God, and ever glorious to him, that "he will by no means clear the guilty," Exod. xxxiv. 17.

Now, if there is a satisfaction to be made, upon the ground of which we are pardoned, it must be either by ourselves, or by a surety; either *we* or *he* are to find out a *ransom*. If *we* can do it, it must be only one of these two ways, either by our active or passive obedience. Our active obedience, though we were able to make it perfect, is no more than it ought to be: it may reach to the *demands* of the law, but not to the *breaches* of it. Doing a present work, is no discharge to a former debt: duty can never be an atonement for sin. "He that offends in one point, is guilty of all," James ii. 10. And if a person does not "continue in all things that are written in the book of the law, he is accursed," Gal. iii. 10. A single failure in a single article lays him under a condemnation.

To say that he accepts of what we ought to *do*, as an equivalent to what we ought to *suffer*, is to *make void the law*, Rom. iii. 30, and *God forbid* that we should do so; for if my duty is to answer all the ends of my punishment, it confounds the whole nature of actions: nor can it be a rational scheme, without supposing that the punishment is quite abolished; and that amounts to no less than if we should say, that God's justice is an attribute to be totally neglected; that though all the rest of them should sit upon a throne of glory, yet this is cast out like the king of Babylon, "as an abominable branch," Isa. xiv. 19, as a perfection no longer to be regarded. But this will never pass in heaven, where the method of praise is already settled: "Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints," Rev. xv. 3. "The heavens shall declare his righteousness," Psal. xcvi. 6; he will always appear to be "the holy and the just One." And as "the pleasure of the Lord," Isa. liii. 6, has prospered in the hand of Christ, so one head of that pleasure is "for his righteousness' sake," Isa. xlii. 21.

So that; I take it for granted, our salvation is, some way or other, become a *righteous thing with God*, what he does with a reputation to his equity. As *we have sinned*, Rom. iii. 23, and that *sin is the transgression of the law*, 1 John iii. 4, so the law is to be magnified when the sin is pardoned: that can never be by our *obedience*; for, whatever law it is that gives life,

“verily righteousness is to be by that law,” Gal. iii. 21. It must then be by our *punishment*; and there are but two ways of allowing this, which I believe will appear to be equally trifling.

If the punishment is complete, there is no pardon for *us*: if it is not, there is no satisfaction to *God*. As duty consists in all that the law commands, so vengeance comprehends all that the law has threatened.

To talk of God's accepting our imperfect obedience, instead of what he has required, is to make *him* guilty of *breaking the law*, as well as *us*: we do it by a *disobedience*, and he by a *dispensation*. And to say that he will receive an imperfect punishment, instead of what he has spoken of, makes the threatening no more than great swelling words of vanity, mere wind and bluster.

I can, therefore, with all the use of my reason, see nothing but a heap of briers and thorns, a long train of entanglement, in denying the satisfaction of Christ; I must suppose that God made a law, which afterwards he thought fit to drop; that he published a threatening without any design of an execution; and that had he foreseen the difficulty, he would never have done it; with all the knotty twisted perplexities that follow, that he is changeable, undetermined, *not of one mind*, Job xxiii. 13, but that any may turn him.

Or I must think, on the other hand, that he has treated the law as an institution, and his justice as an attribute; and that the reparation he has made to the one, and the honour he has given to the other, is by “the obedience of that one Man, through whom many are made righteous,” Rom. v. 19. No “tittle of the law is to fail,” Matt. v. 18, not a grain of the threatening is to be lost. Had the execution fallen upon *us*, there could be no pardon, and therefore it must be upon *another*: and we are “delivered from going down to the pit, because he has found a ransom,” Job xxxiii. 24. But I shall have room enough, within the verge of this text, to clear up the doctrine contained in it.

I would observe, that it is all *revelation* from first to last. The things that we meet with here, are not *what man's wisdom teaches*, 1 Cor. ii. 4. It is above the light of nature, and either the invention or the capacity of reason; *that* can neither contrive nor receive it. The *day spring*, by which we have the discovery, came *from on high*, Luke i. 78. Every part of the proposition is the pure *mystery of God*, Rev. xi., which comes from the opening of the temple in heaven.

*First*, It is one of those things that we could never have known, that there was such a person as God's *own Son*. Supposing that nature and reason could have worked it out by a laborious argument, that “there is an eternal power and God-head,” Rom. i. 20, that it is “he who gathers the wind in his fist, and binds up the waters in a garment;” yet “what is his



name, and what is his Son's name? if thou canst tell," Prov. xxx. 4. That there was "one always with him, daily his delight," Prov. viii. 30, "the brightness of his glory," Rom. xi. 33, "the only begotten of the Father," John i. 18; these are titles that this world would never have heard of, if they were not revealed from another.

*Secondly*, It is no less amazing, when we read of his own Son, that instead of being told on earth what is always seen in heaven, that he lies in the bosom of the Father, it should be said, *He did not spare him*. The account given us of a Son, is no other than what agrees to an enemy, a rebel, a son that causeth shame: that he who is the *Prince of life* in nature, Acts iii. 15, should be subject to death by Providence; "O the depth of the riches of God! How unsearchable are his judgments," Rom. xi. 33.

*Thirdly*, It is still further out of our depth, that one hated by his nation, envied by his rivals, deserted by his friends, betrayed by men, and insulted by devils, should have this whole calamity devolved upon him by *a divine appointment*: that the Father of mercies, instead of protecting him from the wickedness of the age, should *deliver him* up to it. Here are counsels and decrees, predictions and figures, orders and resolutions, that thus it must be: it is not possible that the cup should pass from him, but the will of the Lord shall be done: and as we are encompassed on every side with his marvellous works, the last is of a piece with all the rest; that is,

*Fourthly*, That this should be *for us*. His sufferings are considered as ours; in order to which our guilt is regarded as if it was his: "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 21. If men object against this part of the doctrine, they had as good to do it against all the other. And, indeed, there are two things that may be observed in the whole scheme of revelation.

1st. That quite through the projected way, there is a pure and perpetual tribute of glory to God: he does it all that he alone may have the praise. For this reason, the Son is the person, his death is the price, a divine decree is the establishment, and a divine imputation the effect. We have no share in finding the surety, or bearing the burden, or fixing the appointment, or giving the pardon. "God is all and in all," 1 Cor. xv. 28. And as he did it in no other *view* than of his own glory, so it shall have no other *event*. He did it by himself; he did it for himself. "We are to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6.

2dly. There is nothing can be more opposite to the nature of man. His first iniquity was a falling off from God, and his present corruption is only that apostasy continued; a sliding back

by a perpetual backsliding. They would be *as Gods*, Gen. iii. 5, and nothing can be more against the grain, than to tell them, that if ever they are saved, it must be *as creatures*; for which reason you see all the powers of nature in an uproar, not only against the law of God, but against his gospel.

The apostle has ranged the principles of infidelity in order: they begin with an opposition to the person who comes to save us: they "trample under foot the Son of God," Heb. x. 29, denying his Deity when they dare, and concealing it when they dare not; sometimes making it a falsehood, sometimes a figure, and sometimes an impertinence: and as they are in the way of rebelling, they go on to count *the blood of the covenant an unholy, or common thing*; as if it was not enough to take away his Deity, unless, at the same time, they profaned his sacrifice: and, lastly, that the notion may run into practice, "They do despite to the Spirit of grace."

In what I have already considered, the text gives us plain matter of fact,

1. That he who came to save us is the *Son of God*; that is, One equal to the Father in nature; but, to wave all that, and give a little scope to our argument, he was certainly equal in holiness; "He did no sin, neither was guile in his mouth," 1 Pet. ii. 22. He was *harmless* in his actions, *undefiled* in his person, Heb. vii. 26, and yet,

2. That he had all the miseries that were ever endured by shame and trouble; a terror of soul, and a torment of body, and that without any allay; as if he must wring out the *very dregs of wrath*, and have the *last drop of the cup of trembling*, Psal. lxxv. 8. *There was no sorrow like to his sorrow*. Very often in judgment "God remembers mercy," Hab. iii. 2, but here he had "forgotten to be gracious," Psal. lxxvii. 9, and to his own Son had shut up his tender mercies. He was so far from sparing him *from* his agonies, that he did not spare him *in* them; his mercy was clean gone.

3. This was not a short and sudden thing; he does not use him as we should have expected he would have done a dear Son, a pleasant child, in *speaking against him* for a moment, Jer. xxxi. 20, but he is *delivered up* in a decree that was slow, and big, and pained to bring forth.

Now, if the best person is to have the worst lot, and that by a righteous appointment, what was it for? The question brings us into a narrow compass; we are inclosed; here is a wall on either side, there is no turning to the right hand, or to the left, Numb. xxii. 26. We cannot say any thing against the *fact*; and therefore what can we say about the *cause*? If the answer of the apostle will not be taken, I do not see but we must go without one. If it is not *for us all*, it is impossible to say what it is for. Let us therefore oblige those whose notions make

them enemies to the cross of Christ, and suppose there was no salvation of a chosen people to be obtained this way. Let our imaginations do as the dove did, when it flew out of Noah's ark, Gen. viii. 9, rove, and soar, and wander about, and try if there is any rest for the sole of the foot, besides what the Holy Spirit has given us.

1. Will any say that God punishes in *an arbitrary way, that he afflicts willingly and grieves the children of men?* Lam. iii. 33; that when these miseries came rolling upon Christ, he had no regard to sin at all? that "he will destroy the perfect and the wicked, and laugh at the trial of the innocent?" Job ix. 22, 23. This I hope, *we* shall not dare to do, nor *they* with whom we differ, because it is as contrary to their error, as it is to the truth itself. They give out themselves to be the advocates of the divine mercy, and put this compliment upon their scheme, that it proclaims the Lord to be gracious. Well, if so, he can take no pleasure in the misery of his creatures.

This is saying worse of the gospel, than we can say of *death and damnation*, Jude 7. They in hell do know that the vengeance of eternal fire is for the punishment of sin: and that any one should endure what *they* do for nothing at all, that this should be the lot of him, who "knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21, is as much against the honour of his goodness, as it is of his justice: For,

2. There will be no pretence that he has any iniquity of his own that made him liable to it. The prophet tells us, that when the *Messiah is cut off*, it is *not for himself*, Dan. ix. 26, and I am persuaded this is a point that nobody will dispute with him. The Jews had really more excuse for *themselves*, than we can have for *providence*, if you do not comprehend in the death of Christ the sin of his people. They say to Pilate, "if he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him to thee," John xviii. 30. Thus they thought, thus they believed; *through ignorance* they did it, Acts iii. 17. But such a word as this could never come from the mouth of divine justice. God knew his innocence, it was impossible for him to mistake it; and therefore though he is made an offering for sin, it cannot be for his own. He declared him to be a *righteous servant*, even when he appointed him to *bear our iniquities*, Isa. liii. 11.

3. Was it needful that he should be thus used to "teach him obedience by the things that he suffered?" Heb. v. 7. Many of the saints are *destitute, afflicted, and tormented*, Heb. xi. 37, and God throws them into that lot, for the trial and the lustre of their graces, that they may appear *true*, and may grow *perfect*. Thus when we hear of the *patience of Job*, we see *the end of the Lord*, James v. 11. That good man wanted to be made better: and, upon the whole, the Lord was *very pitiful, and of tender mercy*. He closed up the dispensation with a credit

to himself, and with an improvement to his servant. Till the end of his troubles, he had only "heard of God, by the hearing of the ear; but then his eye saw him, upon which he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes," Job xlii. 3, 6.

But was there any thing of this *pity and tender mercy* in the death of Christ? Did the Lord turn again his captivity? Did he *save him from death*? No: he not only left him to his enemies' hands, but left him *in* them; he then forsook him. And,

Was there any occasion for Christ to *learn more* of God, to see him better than he had done? No surely. The Messiah was not cut off either for the punishment of his sins, or the improvement of his graces; and therefore his being thus *delivered* was *for us all*; as God says, "For the transgression of my people was he stricken," Isa. liii. 8. There are two things that I would observe here:

1. The substitution of his person; he was *given up* for us, to suffer what we should.

2. The extent of his design, that it is *for us ALL*; "the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10, "the whole family in earth and heaven," Eph. iii. 15.

1. The words are as plain as any exposition can make them; he gave himself up *for us all*. There is no eastern figure, or outlandish form of speech; no peculiarities or idioms, of which we are to fetch the sense from afar. We may understand the phrase without any vain knowledge, or "filling our belly with the east wind," Job xv. 2. That he *died* is certain, that it was *not for himself*, is evident. To deny the former is to lie against all history; to affirm the latter is to blaspheme against all goodness. And therefore it is *for us*; that is, for those who are his, "whom the Father had given him," John vi. 37, his children, his charge. It was either *for our sins*, that he bore the punishment that was due to us, or only *for our example*, that we might act as he did. They who are against the former, intrench themselves within the latter: I shall therefore give up my thoughts to these two things:

*First*, Show you the force and wickedness of the one interpretation. And,

*Secondly*, The necessity, clearness, and comfort of the other.

1. Let us see how far we are able to go with this exposition, that the death of Christ was *for our example only*; that we may be taught of him to be so patient to men, so resigned to God, so loose from this world, and so pressing to another. That we are to learn of him, is true, and imitate his behaviour, who "when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously," 1 Pet. ii. 23. The question is not, whether this is *a part* of his design in dying, but whether it is *all*? Does it include the

whole counsel of God in that article? I conceive not; be cause,

(1.) If no more was meant by it, there was no occasion that *the Son of God* should have been the pattern, or so great an extremity of death, the copy. A lower person, and more abated agonies, would have sufficiently answered the end; had he never come into the world at all, we should have been "encompassed about with a cloud of witnesses," Heb. xii. 1. "My brethren, we might have taken the prophets who have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience," James v. 10. God has given us these lessons in abundance; the Scripture is crowded with the trials of that faith, by which the elders have obtained a good report, Heb. xi. 2, and they that follow them may have a fair copy: so that to what purpose was all this waste? Why should God do a thing that might have been spared, without any damage or scantiness to the Bible?

(2.) I cannot think that he was an example *in the sufferings themselves*, whatever he is in his behaviour under them. I am sure to call him so, is the most dreadful doctrine that ever was preached to his poor afflicted followers. That they may be used as he was, is true, and that they ought to act as he did, in many cases, but *not in all* of them. There are several important articles in his trouble, that never *can be* ours, and we may say with comfort, they never *shall be*. As,

[1.] The necessity of a submission to the wrath of man. He, indeed, could have delivered himself from the unrighteous sentence, and he did not do it; but I deny that this is our duty. If I can resist an unlawful execution, I ought: if I had the strength of Samson, I am bound to use it against the oppression of the enemy. Christ is the only instance of passive obedience that ever was, or ever should be. He who made them *fall backwards by a word*, John xviii. 6, could have done the same with the arm of his power, the right hand that is full of Majesty: but thus it must be that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. The only reason why the people of God did not wrest themselves out of the jaws of death, was because *they could not*; so that, in this particular, he is no example, nor has he obliged us to be *the servants of rulers*, Isa. xlix. 7.

[2.] His bearing the wrath of God, is an article of dying peculiar to himself. He is no example this way: it can never be said of any martyr, that "he became a curse," Gal. iii. 13. God does not apply to any of them what the sentence of the law has said of him, "Cursed is the man that is hanged on a tree," Deut. xxi. 23. It is not guilt that made them die; there is no load of iniquity upon *them*, as there was upon *him*; they satisfy no law; they do not obtain by this execution any pardon for themselves, much less for others; and therefore,

[3.] The horror that lay upon his human soul at that time, is a thing in which he was so far from being our *Example*, that he is our *Deliverer*. They shall none of them go out of the world as he did, complaining that God had *forsaken them*, Matt. xxvii. 46. They are usually full of joy with the light of his countenance.

And, by the way, this may give me an occasion to consider another end which the Socinians assign to the death of Christ, that it was in testimony to his cause and doctrine. To which I answer:

If you consider this abstracted from his resurrection, it is no dishonour to say, that there is scarce a martyr from whose death we may not see more reality in the Christian religion, than the world could do from that of Christ; for if you look upon things only by the outward appearance, his cross was enough to stumble all mankind. Well might they call it "the offence of the cross," Gal. v. 11. To see a person go out of the world, disclaimed by men, disowned by God, is amazing.

Had he gone off, as others do, in a "chariot of fire," 2 Kings ii. 11, not "loving their lives to the death," Rev. xii. 11; had he cried out as Stephen did, "I see the heavens opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus sitting at the right hand of God," Acts vii. 56, it might have "stilled the enemy and the avenger," Psal. viii. 2. But to hear him crying out after a departed God, must rather affright those about him; excepting in that one instance of his giving up the ghost with a full voice, by which he appeared to be the Prince and Proprietor of life. God forbid we should die as he did, either in darkness or in desolation; angels standing off, the Father withdrawing himself; under every torment upon his body, and every anguish upon his soul.

[4.] Such an exposition as this quite defeats the whole end of the apostle's argument in my text. He brings it in by way of support to what he had said, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" that is, nothing can hurt us, though all the world should be against us. Now, how does this appear? because, "having given up his own Son for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?"

If Christ was only our example in dying, I am so far from concluding that God will give me *all things*, that I should rather fear he would give me *nothing*; for, if he uses *me* as he used *him* in a dying hour, I shall have no comfort or evidence that he is *for me*; and the case here mentioned, would rather be my horror than my hope. I shall never pray with regard to the *manner* of our Lord's sufferings: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his," Num. xxiii. 10. I never desire to "tread the wine-press of the wrath of God," Rev. xix. 15; no, it is our privilege that "Christ did that alone,

and that of the people there was none with him," Isa. lxiii. 3, and of his people, there shall be *none after him*.

I therefore conclude, that we are, indeed, to know "the fellowship of his sufferings," Phil. iii. 10, and be "conformable to his death," and thus to be "crucified with Christ," Gal. ii. 20, to be "buried with him in baptism unto death," Col. ii. 12, but yet when he was given up for us, it must be to another purpose; that is,

2. That he became a *Substitute*, in our room or stead. The first covenant said, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 16, 17. And accordingly there is an angel with a *flaming sword*, Gen. iii. 24, drawn out against Adam in person, if he dared to return. But in the new covenant "this sword is awakened against another," Zech. xiii. 7, not the flock, but the *Shepherd*: not the man who was God's enemy, but the Man that was *his Fellow, his Equal*, and with whom *he took the sweetest counsel*. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 5.

(1.) This is the plain and easy, the unforced and natural sense of the words: if they mean not this, they mean nothing. To darken a visible text, is "talking in words without knowledge," Job xxxviii. 2. He that stands *for me*, stands in my place; he that acts for me, acts in my stead: he *is* what I should *have been*: he *does* what I should have done: he that is given or appointed for me, is but *where* I should be. To force a common sentence is persecution; it is drawing the gold of the sanctuary into little threads and wires, and using a text as Saul did a disciple, *compelling it to blaspheme*, Acts xxvi. 11.

(2.) The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction is no single, scattered, independent article, but agrees to the whole stream of the Bible. We have not this truth as the small drop of a bucket, but as *the sound of many waters*: I will just read them to you, though in the whole discourse there has been a perpetual distribution of scriptures upon the argument.

It is this that we have the Bible for: it lies at the heart of all revelation; for as salvation was *the only thing* that God had to tell us, so the bruising of Him, who is the seed of the woman, was *the only way*, Gen. iii. 15. This is the *righteousness of God*, that is *witnessed by the law and the prophets*, Rom. iii. 21. Ever since he made a path for the just, this is the light that shone upon it, till it came to a perfect day.

Whatever I have said upon this subject, has been with many quotations from the word of God: I will therefore only give you some, that I do not remember to have mentioned already, and that without any enlargement upon them; by which it must appear, that he who denies this doctrine, will have work enough upon his hands; he is to fight it out with all the Bible: though

they pretend to make a single text or two pass for no more than water spilt upon the ground; yet, "What will they do in the swelling of Jordan?" Jer. xii. 5.

Let any one judge what the death of Christ was for, who does but consider what Isaiah says: "Surely, he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. All we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief, and make his soul an offering for sin. By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. He poured out his soul to death, he was numbered with transgressors, he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors," Isa. liii. 4—12.

Thus Isaiah spake of him, and thus he spake of *himself*: "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many," Mark x. 45. His apostles are witnesses of these things: "God has commended his love towards us, in that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. "When we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly," Rom. viii. 3. "God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, by a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. "Christ has loved us, and given himself for us," Eph. v. 2. "There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. "By his own blood he entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. ix. 12. "The blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, shall purge our conscience," Heb. ix. 14. "His own self bare our sins, in his own body on the tree, by whose stripes we are healed," 1 Pet. ii. 24. "He once suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Pet. iii. 18. "God has loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 10. But the time would fail me to give you all of them.

To this I may add, the whole course of the dispensation that we are under. It is the voice of every ordinance. We are baptized with the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*: that is, "as many of us as are baptized into Christ, are *baptized into his death*," Rom. vi. 3. We hereby declare our belief, that he was "delivered for our offences," Rom. iv. 25, and rose again for our justification.

What is preaching the gospel, but preaching "the cross of Christ?" It is not only to tell a melancholy story, but to "lift up the Son of man," John iii. 14, as the "serpent was lifted up in the wilderness," Num. xxi. 9, and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world," John i. 29.



The Lord's Supper, in both its parts, is a frequent memorial of the doctrine; as often as we do it, it is "in remembrance of him," 1 Cor. xi. 24. The bread shows his body that was "broken for us," the cup is the New Testament "in his blood;" and therefore laying aside the imputation of his righteousness, is a sponge to the whole institution, and leaves us in all our worship to be walking in a vain shew.

Nor do I ever expect to see the Bible *defended* in the hands of those by whom it is thus *defeated*. It is in vain to set out Jesus, unless it be as "a propitiation for our sins through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25; without this our preaching is in vain, and your *faith in vain*. To say that *he did not bear our sins*, is to make the "cross of Christ of none effect," Gal. v. 4.

(3.) This alone can answer the cries of an *awakened* conscience. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God?" Micah vi. 6. Not with "thousands of rams," but with "the precious blood of Christ," 1 Pet. i. 19, as of that one Lamb, who is without blemish and without spot: not with "ten thousand rivers of oil," but in and through him whose name is as "ointment poured forth," Cant. i. 3, and who offered himself as a "sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour," Eph. v. 2; and it may be said of heaven itself, that the whole house is filled with the odour of the ointment, John xii. 3. This speaks peace *for us*, and speaks peace *to us*. It is the blood of Christ that *sprinkles* the mercy-seat above, and the *conscience* here below, that it may serve the living and true God.

It is not duties that will do it; for when a person is made to abhor himself, which is always the case in a thorough conviction, he will see there is no bringing a "clean thing out of an unclean;" Job xiv. 4, that if ourselves are *an unclean thing*, our righteousness is as *filthy rags*, Isa. lxiv. 6.

To say that the doctrine of justification by Christ is an enemy to holiness, is one falsehood; and to say that the opposite opinion does promote it, I am afraid, is another, if we may judge of the case by men's lives. But this we know to be true, that in all the floatings, heavings, and tossings of uneasy conscience, the blood of Christ is our only hope, our only anchor, sure and steadfast.

(4.) The providence of God made this doctrine to be the *glory* of our *Reformation*. It was in a gradual opposition to the righteousness of Christ that Popery began to live; and in the noble revival of the truth it began to die. When they set up justification by works, their monks and masses, their penances and pilgrimages, their fasts and fopperies, their confessions and absolutions, their crosses and cringes, their tyranny and trumpery, were the generation of vipers that issued from this womb. And therefore when God poured out a spirit of reformation upon

the land, it was not only in scouring the churches of imagery, and rumbling among their idols, but the axe was laid to the root of the tree; Christ alone was "exalted in that day," Isa. ii. 17, and the wicked one consumed away by the "brightness of his coming," 2 Thess. ii. 8: then were "our priests clothed with righteousness, and all the saints shouted for joy," Psal. cxxii. 16.

And when this doctrine is denied, the Protestant cause is a going. There is the substance of Popery; such people have got *the stump of Dagon*, they want only the palms of his hands to be set on again.

Go into Poland, as the Jews were ordered to Shiloh, Jer. vii. 22, and see what an angry God has done there for the iniquity of his people. Socinianism made a gap for Popery: their Racovian vanities were the Roman vehicle. Wherever the righteousness of Christ goes out, the man of sin comes in. The Arians, who denied his Deity, prepared the way for Mahomet; and they who denied his satisfaction, made room for Antichrist. Thus, as they went a whoring from their God, they fell to the mother of harlots and abominations.

2. As he was delivered up for us, so remember it was for us *all*. Not the whole human race, as has been thoroughly argued in this lecture; but the word is to be taken in the same compass that our Saviour gives it, when he says to the Father, "All mine are thine," and "all thine are mine." John xvii. 10. The meaning is, that,

(1.) The greatest believer will need it. The chiefest of all the apostles desired to be "found in him, having on the righteousness that is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. And,

(2.) The meanest shall have it. He gathers "the lambs in his arms," Isa. xl. 11. From hence he has his praises above; "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion." Rev. i. 5. When we come "to see the King in his beauty, and behold the land that is afar off," we shall find indeed, "the sword upon his thigh;" but, however, "his garment is dipt in blood," Rev. xix. 13. It is the doctrine we now admire, and we shall hear it rung through the palace of the King. There will be a confluence of persons and praises from the whole compass of time, and the whole circle of nature; all of them together pouring in their eternal melody in those words:

Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

A PLAIN SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNT  
OF A  
SINNER'S JUSTIFICATION BEFORE GOD.

IN FOUR SERMONS.

By MR. ROBERT BRAGGE,

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SERMON I.

GALATIANS ii. 16.—Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

THESE words are like an alabaster box of precious ointment, which, if rightly opened, and applied, will, under the influences of the Spirit, fill every believer's soul with the perfume thereof. In them the Spirit of truth, as he is Christ's glorifier, both lifts up a standard against errors of all sorts, in the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God; and holds out a lamp of gospel light, to direct awakened souls into the true way of gospel justification: for they tell us how the apostles and primitive saints were all of them justified, and that negatively; "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law." All taught of God, in primitive times, learned this great lesson; that man, in his low and lost estate, is not justified by the works of the law: what the law is, and what the works are, of which the apostle here speaks, is placed in the clearest light, by the twenty-first verse of the following chapter; "For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law;" Gal. iii. 21; which plainly intimates, that no such law was given in the apostle's days; and may we not be assured, that no such law has been given since? So that these words bar a sinner's being justified before God, by the works of any law whatever, whether old or new, moral or ceremonial, perfect or remedial.

Then follows another lesson, which all who were in Christ's

school learned, in those early days; without which the former would have driven awakened sinners to despair, "but by the faith of Jesus Christ," that is, which has Christ for its object; as is evident from what follows: "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ." Awakened sinners, in that day, were not left to sink under their load of guilt at mount Sinai, but were directed to mount Zion, and brought to Christ, as he is revealed thereon; for so it follows, "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law:" then is added a further confirmation of the foregoing assertion; "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

In speaking therefore to this great scripture, so expressive of the faith and actings of primitive saints, I shall observe the following easy method:

I. I shall show what it is for a guilty sinner to be justified before God, the Judge of all.

II. I shall inquire whence it is that any of Adam's fallen posterity are justified.

III. I shall show how it is that sinners are justified.

IV. I shall endeavour to guard you against errors of all sorts, relating to a sinner's justification before God.

I. I shall show what it is for a sinner to be *justified* before God: where I shall briefly assign the difference between gospel justification, and gospel sanctification; the blending of which together is a Popish error, very pernicious, and of fatal consequence, as it militates against the Protestant doctrine of imputed righteousness, and casts a very dark veil on some of the brightest parts of the apostle Paul's epistles; and which is worst of all, tends to eclipse the glory of Christ, as he is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes; who is first made righteousness, and so sanctification to us: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made to us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30: which order of God relates to the application of salvation, and ought not to be inverted, nor broken in upon, by such as preach the gospel.

Gospel justification is a change of state and condition in the eye of the law, and of the lawgiver; whereas gospel sanctification is a blessed conformity of heart and life to the law, or will of the lawgiver. The first is a relative change, from being guilty to be righteous; the other is a real change, from being filthy to be holy: by the one we are made near to God; by the other we are made like to him. By being justified, of aliens we are made children; by being sanctified, the enmity of the heart is slain, and the sinner made not only a faithful loyal subject, but a loving dutiful child. This may be set in the clearest light by the following simile. Our children, the day they are born,

are as much our children as they are ever after; but they are many years growing up into a state of manhood; their likeness to us, as it respects the mind, as well as the body, is daily increasing: thus a king's first-born son is heir apparent to the crown, whilst lying in the cradle: after growth adds nothing to his title; but it does to his fitness to govern, and to succeed his father. Our right to heaven comes not in at the door of our sanctification, but at that of our justification; but our meetness for heaven does. By Christ's righteousness, being upon us, we have a right to the inheritance; and by Christ's image being drawn upon us, we have our meetness.

I shall next observe, that to be justified, is more than barely to be forgiven; for to be entitled to, and brought to heaven, must be more than to be saved from hell. A man may be brought in not guilty at the king's bar, without being advanced in the king's court: a prince may pardon a traitor without conferring on him any further favours. God's justified ones, are not only forgiven, according to the riches of the Father's grace, but they are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places," according to the largeness of the Father's heart. Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, has brought in such a way of knowing and of enjoying God, as the first Adam and his covenant were utter strangers to; to wit, a seeing God face to face, in the presence chamber of heaven, and a being filled with God, even with all his fulness. God's justified ones are not barely to live, but to reign in life by Christ Jesus.

Now, to prevent mistakes, as well as to clear up several texts of Scripture, I would observe that we read in Scripture of a two-fold justification, neither of which is the justification I am to speak to. We read of a comparative justification; "The Lord said unto me, backsliding Israel hath justified herself, more than treacherous Judah," Jer. iii. 11. Of this we also read; "I tell you, this man," (that is the publican,) "went down to his house justified, rather than the other," Luke xviii. 14. We also read, in Scripture, of a declarative justification: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Mat. xii. 37. The saints all of them speak the language, not of Ashdod, but of Canaan, and by so doing they evidence themselves to be of the number of God's justified ones; whereas Christless sinners speak the language not of heaven, but of hell. Of this declarative justification the apostle James speaks, in the second chapter of his epistle; who, in this view, may easily be reconciled with the apostle Paul. The charge of sin brought against us by the law of God, and that of being hypocrites, of which the saints are falsely accused by the men of the world, are two different charges. By good works the believer vindicates himself from the latter, as the apostle James did; but it is not by any works of righteousness that the saint, though an

apostle, hath done, or can do, that he is freed from the former. For a guilty sinner to be justified before God, the Judge of all, is more than to be either comparatively or declaratively justified; which is the justification I am to treat of.

In doing which, I shall not consider it as it is an immanent act in God: God's immanent acts are surrounded with light inaccessible, and full of glory; and are as far, nay, infinitely further, out of the reach of our minds, than the highest star in heaven is beyond the reach of our arms. As he must be a man, and not an inferior being, who knows what the immanent acts in man are, or how things lie in his mind and will; and he must be an angel who knows what the immanent acts of an angel are; so he must be God, who knows what the immanent acts in God are, or how things lie in the divine mind and will. Thus God himself speaks of them: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts," Isa. lv. 8, 9. It must therefore be safest in this, and in all other gospel doctrines, to soar no higher than the wing of the word will carry us.

In the word, we read of a court held by God, as a Judge, in paradise; before whom our first parents were audibly cited, tried according to truth, and condemned in righteousness. God also held a court on mount Sinai; the sight whereof was so terrible, that Moses, though a typical mediator, quaked and trembled, as did the mount on which it was held. But he now holds his court on mount Zion: where it is proclaimed, as on the house top, "That by Christ all who believe are justified from all things, from which there was no being justified by the law of Moses," Acts xiii. 39; that we are freely justified by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus; that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes; and that we are made the righteousness of God in him: "He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," Rom. x. 4, which last is the amazing account we have in Scripture of a sinner's justification before God; which, to be sure, is the wonder of angels, that man fallen so low in the first Adam, should be raised so high in Christ the second; that they who are hell-deserving dust and ashes in themselves, should be made the righteousness of God in another.

So that for a sinner to be justified before God, is not, properly speaking, for him to have the effects and fruits of Christ's purchase imparted; for so they are in a sinner's regeneration; but to have that righteousness of his, which is made up of his active and passive obedience to the law of God, as a covenant, imputed; by which he not only fulfilled the law, but magnified

it, so as to make it infinitely honourable, as well as repaired the breaches thereof: this righteousness was wrought out for us, long before we had a being, but it is not to, nor upon us, in the sense of the Scripture, till we believe. To talk as some have done, and still do, that the effects of this righteousness are imputed, is to speak very improperly, as well as unscripturally; these are imparted, but it is the righteousness itself that is imputed: how else could it be said, as it is in Scripture, that believers are "made the righteousness of God, in Christ;" and that in "Christ we have all righteousness for our justification?" the last of which is the language of the Old Testament, as the first is of the New.

In the ruin brought upon us by the first Adam, not only the dismal effects and fruits of his fall are imparted, but the guilt of his first sin is imputed; he being our federal head, by the same divine appointment that he was our common parent; as is evident beyond all contradiction, from that great text, Rom. v. 18, "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Let the apostle Paul, who was once a Pharisee, determine whether Christ's righteousness be not imputed, as well as its purchased grace imparted; "That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. Thus much may suffice for the first general head.

II. I shall very briefly show *whence* it is that any of Adam's fallen posterity are justified. Had our first parents continued steadfast in God's covenant, their justification would have been owing to a righteousness of their own, wrought out by their own care and industry; but our justification, who are sinners, and as such are fallen infinitely short of the glory of God, must be owing to another spring; even the free, abounding, super-abounding grace of God. Adam's justification would have been according to the dues of creation; whereas our justification is every way considered above the dues thereof; being wholly of grace, and not of works. This, and no other, is the account which the Scriptures give of it; "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus," Rom. iii. 24. In which words are joined what the Arians and Arminians say can never meet; even a being freely justified by grace, and a full price laid down to obtain it: but the seeming contradiction vanishes, by considering, that the price was neither sought, nor brought by us; but is only and wholly the provision and gift of grace; which gift is so contrived, as to

manifest the grace of God to the uttermost: it is that grace may shine forth the brighter, and not be eclipsed, that this way of justification was pitched upon; for Christ the Redeemer was, throughout the whole of his suretiship, undertakings, and performances, to the praise of the glory of the Father's grace. Never did grace so triumph, as in the provision and gift of Christ. Every step the Redeemer took in this great work, was most expressive, as of the love of his heart, so of the grace of the Father's; which hereby is so fully and gloriously manifested, as to be said to reign, through Christ's righteousness, to eternal life. "Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin has reigned to death, so grace might reign, through righteousness, to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. iii. 24, of the reign of which there shall be no end. Our shoutings will be grace, grace, not only when we first come to heaven, but ever after; which will be enlarged rather than straitened, and strengthened rather than grow low and weak, throughout the endless ages of eternity. As they about the throne rest not, so they cease not thus to give glory; of which reign, how small is the portion which the most knowing among us at present know? We write and preach, and think and talk about it, but like so many children; which is the apostle's own comparison, though he had been wrapt up into the third heaven. As no words could express to the queen of Sheba the glory of Solomon's kingdom, so less able are words to express the glory of the reign of grace; the superaboundings of which will fill an eternity, as a spring-tide doth our rivers, and employ all heads, hearts, and tongues about the throne; when our likeness to our glorified head, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be complete. Thus much may suffice for the second inquiry.

III. I shall show *how* it is that sinners are justified. The light of nature may know something relating to the justification of a man, in a state of innocency, on the foot of a covenant of works; but it knows nothing how it is that sinners are justified on the foot of a covenant of grace; this is such a secret, as was hid from men and from angels: to the Bible alone we owe the discovery of this rich mine of gospel treasure; in digging into which, I shall observe the following method:

1. I shall show, out of Scripture, what part in this weighty affair is assigned to God the Father.

2. I shall show what part is assigned to the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. I shall show what part is assigned to the ever blessed Spirit.

4. I shall show what is the use of faith, in a sinner's justification; where I shall answer a threefold inquiry.

(1.) Whether faith be only a manifestation.



(2.) Whether the believer may, in any sense, be said to be justified before faith.

(3.) How it is that elect infants, dying in infancy, are justified.

5. I shall evince the sure connexion which there is between faith and actual justification.

6. I shall assign to good works their proper place in this weighty affair.

7. I shall show of what use the law, the written word, and the court of conscience, are therein.

1. I shall show what part in this great affair God the Father takes to himself, according to the Scriptures. He there speaks of himself as being the Judge of all; and of consequence he must have a principal hand therein. Accordingly we read, that it is God who justifies: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies," Rom. viii. 33; to whom all who believe in Jesus come to be justified; "and to God the Judge of all," Heb. xii. 23. He who passed sentence upon sinning Adam, with all he represented, as a federal head, and should ever spring from him, as a common parent, of whose holy and perfect law all sin is the transgression; he it is that justifies, or no flesh could be truly, or to any saving purpose, justified.

That this great and solemn transaction may appear to be the pleasure of the Lord, being effected not only with a salvo to his truth and holiness, but in a way most expressive of all the divine perfections, whereby the Father may get to himself, in point of manifestation, a glorious name for ever, the wonderful platform of a sinner's justification, with all that leads to it, or is contained in it, or is consequential upon it, is spoken of, in Scripture, as his contrivance, and there represented not only as the birth, but as the master-piece of his adorable wisdom: "Wherein he hath abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence:" so that the sinner's justifying righteousness, is the provision and gift of his love and grace; and he who brought in or wrought out this righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, is his righteous servant: "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified," Isa. xlix. 3, saith the Father to Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness, under a double character; the one subordinate to the other; as God's righteous servant, and by God's appointment, his people's righteous surety: who came into this world, as sent by the Father, and set about this great work, as one completely fitted for it, and fully authorized to accomplish it by the Father. Of both these you read at large in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings," &c., Isa. lvi. 1. "Christ glorified not himself to be made an

High-priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," Heb. v. 5. Neither did he act in his own name in the discharge of that office: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not;" whose Father was always with him as Man and Mediator. He both assisted and accepted him, throughout the whole of his obedience, whether active or passive, and was with him in his private life, as well as in his public showing to Israel: he was not alone in the cradle, nor in his reputed father's house, any more than at Jerusalem, or in the temple; who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, whereby he was actually and publicly justified, not barely from the false accusations of his enemies, but as his people's surety and great representative, from all those sins he had undertaken to satisfy for. He told his disciples, that the "Spirit should convince the world of righteousness, because he went to the Father;" for had he not fulfilled all righteousness, instead of being received up into glory, he had been sent back to finish the work which the Father had given him to do.

The Father's part, therefore, in this weighty affair, is to provide for his people a justifying righteousness, in all respects perfect and complete, such as his law, the great standard of all righteousness, requires: and as to provide it for them, so to impute it to them, which is done by him, as Judge of all, not audibly by a voice from heaven, but by a more sure word of prophecy, as out of the mouth of two matchless witnesses, the Old and the New Testament. God's written word as really answers to the records of heaven, as the counterpart doth to the original deed; for as the law is a perfect copy of God's will, so the gospel is as perfect a copy of God's heart: saints and sinners may depend upon it, that what the word of God now says they are, Christ, as Judge, will declare them to be. We are not one thing in the eye of the word, and another thing in the eye of Christ, who will own and honour his written word, as all along, so at last. As certainly as that declares Christ's righteousness to be upon us who believe, it is so, according to eternal purposes, to all those ends of love and grace, for which it was contrived and provided by the Father.

None, save God, the Judge of all, could make Christ to be sin for us; and none, save God, the Judge of all, can make any of us the righteousness of God in him; both which are ascribed to him; "All things are of God; who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; for he has made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 18, which blessed exchange

must be the wonder of angels, and will be for ever the wonder of all the saints.

The provision, revelation, and imputation of this righteousness, is wholly and solely of grace, in the superaboundings thereof; therefore is it once and again called the *gift of righteousness*, which is its New Testament name; such a gift as has an abundance of grace going along with it; "Much more they who receive an abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ," Rom. v. 17. To conceive of God, as of a just God, and not as of a Saviour, borders upon despair; and to conceive of him as a Saviour, and not as a just God, borders upon presumption; but to conceive of him, as being a just God, and a Saviour, is to form right and becoming thoughts of him, such as both Testaments furnish us with; for thus God speaks of himself: "There is no God else beside me, a just God, and a Saviour," Isa. xlv. 21. And therefore thus should we think of him; his being a just God should but the more endear him, as he is the provider of righteousness; and his being a Saviour, should but the more encourage us to plead this righteousness with, and before him, as Judge of all. In a word, as the whole of our salvation, by the Lord Jesus Christ, is of grace, (*By grace are ye saved*), so is this main branch thereof, a sinner's justification before God.

I shall conclude this discourse by endeavouring to return an answer to the following inquiry, which contains the greatest difficulty that can be raised against the head of doctrine I am upon; which lies at the bottom of every sinner's heart, in objecting against the being of a God, and the truth of the gospel in general, as well as this of a sinner's justification before God in particular. The objection is this: Why was sin suffered to enter this world, which hath hurled such confusion quite round the globe; to finish which, in a way of satisfaction cost God so dear, as the blood of his own and only begotten Son? To which I answer: "God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions," Eccl. vii. 29. The first sin was, to be sure, the genuine birth of free will. Now, to ask why God made a free agent, and suffered him to act suitably to his nature, that is, freely, would be a vain and a foolish inquiry. We may safely conclude, that had not God known how to deal with such an enemy as sin, so as to bring glory to himself, and good to the chosen people, out of all the confusion with which sin has filled this world, he would never have suffered it to have entered; but the same super-creation grace which prevented the fall of the elect angels, would have interposed, and prevented the fall of the elect among the children of men; so that the gospel is a full answer to this bold inquiry: according to which, God is commending his love in the gift of his Son; may

we not safely say, so as it could no other way be so sweetly and fully, so surprisingly and gloriously recommended? "But God commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 8. He also, who is an infinitely wise and holy God, takes occasion from the aboundings of sin, to manifest the superaboundings of his grace: "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin has reigned to death, so might grace reign to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom v. 20. In the gospel we have a new display of all the divine perfections; according to which, God, who is love, is not content to manifest his love in a direct way, as it was manifested towards the elect angels, and, without any more to do, fix us in glory, but has pitched upon such ways of manifesting his love, as contain in them fathomless depths, unmeasurable heights, and incomprehensible breadths and lengths; for the love in God's heart being infinite, must be as great as all transient acts can express for ever; not only such as are plain and obvious, but such as are in the deep waters, and take the most astonishing compass and turns.

To create such a free agent as man, has nothing in it unbecoming an infinitely perfect Being, who was made in the image of God, and placed at the head of this lower creation, as lord thereof. Whatever became a bountiful Creator to bestow on man, was with a very liberal hand given to our first parents: nothing that could be called a creation due was withheld from them; but, as creatures, they were mutable; and, as rational, they were free. To enter into covenant with our first parents, who were made but a little lower than the angels, and crowned with so much glory and honour, was but a further honour put upon them; neither does this carry or contain in it any thing unbecoming the majesty of God. To suffer them to act suitably to the natural powers, and to the state of probation they were placed in, that is, freely, though at this door sin might enter, and did, yet this contains in it nothing that is unbecoming: neither does his restraining and over-ruling so great and deadly an evil as sin, for the manifestation of his own glory, in bringing light out of sin's horrible darkness, and order out of all the confusion sin is big with, and hath, since the fall, brought into this world. These things are expressive of power, and not of weakness, of adorable wisdom, and not of folly. Thus the apostle speaks of them, especially of the latter, God's concluding or shutting up all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all; and thus should we: "God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all: O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Rom. xi. 32. This shutting up all in unbelief, must include every chosen vessel,

both among the Jews and among the Gentiles; for the pronoun *them*, is not in the original.

The following simile, which I owe to the great Dr. Goodwin, may serve to illustrate what I have delivered on this head. Suppose a curious artist, who hath made the finest and the best vessel of glass that was ever made, should let it fall out of his hand, and break all in pieces, with a design to show his greater skill in so setting together the broken pieces thereof, as to make it more beautiful, and useful, and stronger than ever, even so strong as to be out of all danger of being ever broke; would any censure his conduct, or say he had acted a weak unbecoming part, in letting the glass he had made, with so much care and art, fall and break? Would not all commend the act, and admire his skill? For though to make glass is confessed by all to be a curious art; yet to be able so to set together broken glass, as to render it proof against all accidents, the hammer itself not excepted, would be a far greater piece of skill. The application is easy, and very instructing; though the simile falls short in this, that man broke and destroyed himself; "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help," Hos. xiii. 9. For God to make so noble a creature as man, endowed, as, to be sure, he originally was, with such noble powers, and vast capacities, was much; but to new-form him, after sin had mangled and broken him, as he shall undoubtedly be formed by Christ, as to body, as well as soul, in the morning of the resurrection, is much more. The saints will not then complain of God, nor be tempted to charge him foolishly, for suffering sin to enter: and as for the atheist and the deist, they will then be struck dumb, and for ever silenced. The restitution of all things by Christ, the second Adam, will set all that relates to, or is consequential upon the sin and fall of the first Adam, in the clearest and most astonishing light.

There are two New Testament texts, as full of glory, as any in the whole book of God, which I would turn to, and direct how they may with safety be received, and feasted upon, and should be so by the whole household of faith. The first of them is this; "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him, Eph. i. 10. The other is this, "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. i. 20. Now to carry these texts beyond the election of the Father's grace, is to abuse them; but to understand them of the full birth of electing and redeeming love, is to make a right use of them; and of that other which is like to them, "Whom the heaven must receive, till the times of the restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy pro-

phets, since the world began," Acts iii. 21. Neither man, the inhabitant, nor this earth, on which he dwells, are what they originally were, or as they at first came out of the hand of God; but both are what they became through sin, like the sherds of a broken vessel. Man is a child of darkness; a slave to sin and Satan; a wolf to his neighbour; a rebel to his God, and the destroyer of himself: and as for the earth on which man walks and dwells, sin has turned it into a howling wilderness; its atmosphere is filled with irregular winds, hurricanes, and storms; with noxious vapours, blasts, and lightnings; with terrible thunder, and sometimes with prodigies and frightful sights: the earth is so far from being alike fruitful, that in it are sandy deserts, and barren heaths, hard rocks, and flaming mountains. Its fields bring forth thorns, and briers, and weeds, in an abundance; there is the nettle, and the hemlock, with other poisonous plants, and hurtful fruits; its insects are many of them armed with stings, and some full of deadly poison: there is the viper and the scorpion; its birds and beasts are birds and beasts of prey: and as for men, how many are the defective, as well as monstrous births among them? Thousands are blind, and deaf, and crooked from the womb; and thousands are strangled in the birth: all are born mortal; and how many die soon after they are born? They just salute the world, and so take leave of it. All which things are the fruits of the curse, and undeniable instances and proofs of God's hatred of sin, and of his holy displeasure against sinners.

But, after all that can be said on this head, to silence gain-sayers, that wise and most comprehensive saying of Christ, occasioned by the gospel's being hid from the wise and prudent of the world, and revealed unto babes, should satisfy all true believers: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," Luke x. 21. To his sovereign will and pleasure, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, it seemed good, for wise and holy ends, to suffer the fall of our first parents, and, by them, sin to enter: and to his sovereign grace it seems good, thus wonderfully to overrule it, as to the whole election of his grace. All which lessens not the evil that is in sin; no more than the skill of the physician, in prescribing a sovereign antidote, lessens the malignity that is in poison: nor is it any ways the least excuse for sinners, who transgress the law with hearts full of enmity against the gospel. Might natural men quite round the globe have their wills, Christ would be in heaven alone. To quarrel with electing love, as it is manifested in the gospel, and with Him, that justifies such as believe in Jesus, is to quarrel with the best and the only effectual way of drawing us out of the pit, and bringing us safe to glory. How empty would the story of Joseph have been, had he not been envied, and sold by his brethren, with all that was consequential thereupon! Where-

as it is now one of the most remarkable and surprising that was ever written. How sweet did Israel's bondage in Egypt, make Israel's rest in Canaan! and how astonishing and full of God was their deliverance! God's sovereign will and pleasure is, in many instances, the *ne plus ultra* of the believer's inquiries: no other, nor better reason can be given, why the world is not as many millions of years old as it is thousands; and why the globe of this earth is not as large as the body of the sun; and why the numbers of the elect are not double and triple to what they are, who, considered in the first fruits and in the full vintage, will be an innumerable multitude. He, who works all things after the counsel of his own will, is in these things accountable to none; neither to man, nor to angels: none may say to God, what doest thou? whose own glory, in the manifestation of it, must, beyond all dispute, be his highest end: a consideration which should not only quiet, but rejoice all who believe unto righteousness: who cannot desire more than is entailed on them, in that single, but great text: "Let none glory in man, for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. Can the great soul of man, when ennobled and enlarged by regenerating grace, open its mouth wider, or desire more? Let us therefore, who are among God's justified ones, join in giving thanks with those of whom the apostle speaks; "All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgivings of many, redound to the glory of God," 2 Cor. iv. 15. In so high and comprehensive a sense does praise wait for God in Zion; whose inhabitants are encouraged to praise God by being told, as from the mouth of God, *Whoso offers praise, glorifies me*. They therefore whom God justifies, should not, upon every slight occasion, or new trouble, hang their harps upon the willows, but rather look up to have them new tuned, by a fresh anointing.

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## SERMON II.

GALATIANS ii. 16.—Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

IT is a sweet word, and full of encouragement to us Protestants, to suffer for the truth, as well as to defend it; "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall

wax old, like a garment; and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished," Isa. li. 6. Let the batteries raised by hell, and by Rome, against the Protestant doctrine of a sinner's justification before God, be never so many, and be never so artfully planted, and boldly discharged, they shall not be able finally to prevail against it. He, who waved his right of being in heaven as soon as he was incarnate, and, in that sense, left heaven to fulfil all righteousness, will not suffer such a jewel to be stolen out of his mediatorial crown, as is his suretiship righteousness.

2. I shall proceed to show what *part* is, in Scripture, assigned unto the Lord Jesus Christ, in the business of a sinner's justification before God; where I beg leave to premise, for the preventing of mistakes, which some are ready to run into, and for the clearing of several texts of Scripture, which the Arians are very fond of, that in many places of Scripture, especially in the New Testament, where Christ speaks of himself, and is spoken of, it is spoken of him either as the Son of man, or as sustaining the character, and discharging the office of a Mediator. Thus is that scripture to be understood, in which Christ tells his disciples, that "the Father is greater than he;" and that other, with many more, where Christ assures us, that "the Son can do nothing of himself;" and thus I shall all along consider him. This lessens not the necessity, nor the truth of Christ's being truly God, as well as man, but presupposes it; for, as in nature a human body, suppose it had life and motion, without a human soul, would be fit for no post of service, neither in church nor in state; so Christ's human nature alone, though the first creature, and the noblest of all creatures, without his divine, would no ways be fit to sustain the character, nor to discharge the office of a Mediator. If we suppose a crystal globe to be never so large and clear, would it, of itself, have in it any light or heat: but if we could suppose it filled with the body of the sun, how would it glow and shine? He, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, which is affirmed in Scripture of the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is said, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9, must outshine in glory, and outdo in usefulness, all mere creatures, though there were never so many worlds of them, and be infinitely fit and capable to be Head of the church, and Saviour of the body: nothing can be too difficult for him to effect, nor too great for him to accomplish; be it to finish transgression, in a way of satisfaction, or to bring in everlasting righteousness. Let us conceive, if we can, of any more fit to quicken the dead in sins, and to raise the dead in nature; to govern the world, and to judge it; to bring off more than conquerors and safe to glory, such as belong to the whole election of the Father's grace, or to



make all things new, than He is in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This being premised, Christ's part in the business of a sinner's justification before God, according to the Scripture, is to bring in a justifying righteousness for the whole election of the Father's grace. He, as the Surety of a better covenant, was called of God, and freely undertook to pay his people's debts, both that of satisfaction to the law, as a broken covenant, and that of service to the law, as a covenant of works. He was accordingly made of a woman, and made under the law: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. iv. 4, that is, under its preceptive part, as a covenant, as well as its penalty, a broken covenant; its preceptive part, as a covenant, being its principal part; to enforce which, all penalties, even among men, are added to their laws: as a covenant, the first Adam transgressed it; and therefore it became Christ, the second Adam, thus to fulfil it. God's perfect law was, to be sure, in the utmost perfection thereof, written on Christ's heart and nature, and so expressed throughout the whole of his life: "Thy law is within my heart," Psal. xl. 8. He did more and better work for God, that is, work of greater worth and consequence, in the short space of thirty odd years, than the first Adam would, or could have done, had he continued steadfast in God's covenant to this day. Christ was fulfilling all righteousness whilst lying in the cradle; which, doubtless, was part of his humiliation: of whom, whilst an infant, it may be said, that the first Adam, at the head of this lower creation, was but as his menial servant, being the figure of him who was to come, "who is the figure of him who was to come," Rom. v. 14. Christ, the second Adam, was fulfilling all righteousness throughout the whole of his private life; for this also was part of his humiliation. Suppose the natural sun should be taken out of the heavens, and be so lessened and darkened, as to be hid for a time in one of the caverns of this earth, to bring about any of his adorable purposes, who made it; would not this surprise and fill with wonder all the inhabitants of this globe? I may safely say, that the obscure and private life of Christ, the Sun of righteousness, was fuller of wonder. He went on fulfilling all righteousness, active as well as passive, at Jerusalem, and every where else, till he bowed on the cross his high and holy head, saying, "It is finished." Christ's suretyship righteousness may be well called, for it really is, a robe of super-creation righteousness, being, in all respects, beyond and above the dues of creation; which no creature, neither men nor angels, could so much as ever have thought of, and much less have expected at his hand, who was their Creator, how liberal soever in other respects he had been towards them. This robe lay hid in the uppermost and most secret recesses of God's

wardrobe, or rather heart, being wholly super-creation grace: though Adam had, in a sense, the moon under his feet, he could not thus challenge a being clothed with the sun, which was not then risen in his horizon; though the first Adam's world was made by Christ, and he was Christ's figure, yet he knew it not. This excellent and excelling piece of knowledge was reserved for gospel times; which so ennobles the dispensation we are under, that it is called the kingdom of God, and of heaven. Christ's suretiship righteousness may be also called, for it really is, a robe of super-angelic righteousness: which as far excels and outshines the righteousness of all the elect angels, as the shining of the sun, in its meridian strength, does that of the new moon: for, would it not be blasphemy to call theirs, as Christ's is called, "the righteousness of God;" or to say that they are "made the righteousness of God," in their own, as we are said to be made in Christ's righteousness? God no where calls their righteousness, as he does Christ's, "my righteousness; I bring near my righteousness," Isa. xlv. 13. Christ's suretiship righteousness may be also called, for it really is, a super-paradisaical righteousness. Had our first parents continued steadfast in God's covenant, their robe of justifying righteousness had been complete: but not of like worth with this, the merit, as well as the atoning virtue of which is infinite. What is the richest livery of a lackey, if compared with the royal robes of a king? Nothing done by the figure of him that was to come, can be compared with what was done by Christ, the substance, whose suretiship righteousness has in it to an overflowing, all the endearing, recommending properties, which that of a Saviour can have, to recommend it to sinners. As,

(1.) It is a *sin-finish*ing righteousness; so it is called in the Old Testament; *to finish transgression*, Dan. ix. 24, and it is abundantly declared so to be in the New. To finish the sins but of one, even the least of sinners, in a way of satisfaction, would have rendered bankrupt and beggared the archangel, not to say all the angels in heaven; whereas Christ, as surety of a better testament, has, in a way most expressive of all the divine perfections, finished the numberless sins of the many thousands of God's elect; who were chosen not only with Christ, as an elder brother, but in him as an Head. The Scripture says, "God has chosen us in him," Eph. i. 4, not to prevent our fall; for that would have obviated his other character of being our Saviour; for "he is Head of the church, and Saviour of the body," Eph. v. 23; but to deliver us out of the pit, by bringing us off more than conquerors, and fixing us in glory beyond all danger, or so much as a possibility of losing the mansions allotted us in his Father's house, where we are to be for ever with the Lord; "So shall we be ever with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17.

(2.) Being a sin-finisher, it must of consequence be a *justice-satisfying* righteousness; for the demands of God's vindictive justice upon us, and the whole of its controversy with us, are founded on sin; this would have no more a controversy with the elect, among the children of men, were they not sinners, than it has with the elect angels. I might have added, it is not barely a justice-satisfying, but a justice-declaring righteousness; "To declare his righteousness, that he might be just," Rom. iii. 26. The flames of hell, or all the penal sufferings of men, and of devils in the bottomless pit, are not so full a declaration of God's vindictive justice, as were the suretiship sufferings of Christ, the Lamb slain. The awaking of God's sword against the man that was his fellow, is a non-such instance of God's vindictive justice.

(3.) It is a *law-answering*, or rather *magnifying* righteousness. Thus it is spoken of by the prophet: "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable," Isa. xlii. 21. Sin being the transgression of the law, pours the utmost contempt, both upon it, and upon God, the Lawgiver; and were it as powerful, as it is exceeding sinful, it would for ever cancel the one, and dethrone the other: the sinner's wish would be every sinner's attempt, that there might be no God. Now, the law on which our first parents, in eating the forbidden fruit, poured such contempt, and on which like contempt is poured by all their numerous offspring, in their several generations; Christ, as the fulfiller of all righteousness, not only fulfilled, to every jot or tittle, but by so doing, because of the dignity of his person, so magnified it, as it could have been no other way, that we can conceive of, magnified. This righteousness therefore of his, though it is manifested without the law, from mount Zion, and not from mount Sinai; yet it is witnessed to by the law, as well as by the prophets; "Now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested; being witnessed to by the law, and by the prophets," Rom. iii. 21. From all which it follows, that,

(4.) Christ's suretiship righteousness is not only a *God-appeasing*, but a *God-delighting* righteousness; for, is not the whole of our salvation obtained thereby, expressly called the pleasure of the Lord? "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," Isa. liii. 10. Never was the Father better pleased, for never was he more glorified, by any righteousness, than he was by Christ's; who was raised from the dead, as God's righteous servant, and his people's righteous surety; not by a single attribute, such as the power of God, or by the goodness and tender mercy of our God; but by the glory of the Father. "Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father," Rom. vi. 4; this is a full proof that he was an offering, and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

THUS we see what part is allotted in Scripture to the Lord Jesus Christ, in the business of a sinner's justification before God. His province was to finish transgression in a way not of bribery, not of composition, but most expressive of the glory of all the divine perfections; that is, in a way of real and full satisfaction; and so to make an end of sin, as in the time and season thereof, to put an everlasting end to sinning: for, as the chosen people shall sorrow no more, so they shall sin no more for ever, when in glory; and such reconciliation for iniquity that the once offended Majesty of heaven may not only settle his abode with, and among the chosen people, as being his rest; not desiring to be any further glorified than he is in them, and by them, and will be so for ever: but may rejoice over them, with singing, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing," Zeph. iii. 17: and to bring in for them such an everlasting righteousness, as will outlast the lasting hills, and the canopy of heaven itself; in which the saints will outshine angels, and be brought to be next to the throne: the merit of which is given forth in the blessings of grace here, and in those of glory hereafter; and can no more be lessened, than Christ's mediatory fulness can be exhausted; from which the gospel receives its name, being called the ministration of righteousness, "Much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory," 2 Cor. iii. 9, and in which all who believe come up with an everlasting acceptance, with and before God the Judge of all.

Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, fills both testaments with his glory; for thus considered he is the sum of the Old Testament promises and prophecies, and the substance of Old Testament types and figures; and thus considered he is the treasure hid in the field of the New. Paul's heart and life were not fuller of his pharisaic performances, before conversion, than they were of Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes, after conversion: his lip and pen, though once the lip and pen of a blasphemer, sounded the trumpet of the gospel louder and sweeter, and with greater success than any before or since his day. This was a fuller confirmation of the truth of the doctrines of the gospel, and of this of imputed righteousness, than it would be, should the Mufti turn Christian, or the Pope become Protestant; and so both preachers of this righteousness which Christ wears as Head of the church, and surety of the better covenant, upon the throne; as well as all the saints, shine in it about the throne.

3. My next undertaking is to say something concerning the *work* of the ever blessed Spirit in this great and weighty affair, a sinner's justification before God. His office, according to the Scriptures, is to apply purchased salvation; and of consequence,

to bring near this righteousness; "I bring near my righteousness," Isa. xlv. 13, saith God, speaking of this robe, and gift of righteousness; which he doth not only doctrinally by his word; but internally and powerfully by his own Spirit: who is no more a created being, or the spirit of a creature, than the power of God is a created power, or the power of a creature. Thus in all probability it was brought near to our first parents; we can hardly think that so great a preacher as God should beat the air, and speak only to the ear, without speaking to the heart of the first Adam; who was to hand down the gospel to, and to teach his children the fear of the Lord. He also brought it near to two of Adam's sons, to Abel and to Seth; and to how many more of his children we know not. He also brought it near to the antediluvian fathers; particularly to Noah, who was a preacher thereof. God by his Spirit called Abraham out of a land of graven images; and gave him by an eye of faith to see at such a distance of time Christ's day, as he was the finisher of sin, and fulfiller of all righteousness. By the same searcher of the deep things of God, it was brought near to Moses, and to all the chosen people under the Old Testament; and to those unlikely instruments, the first founders of the gospel dispensation, under the New; who, though illiterate fishermen, were so taught of God to spread the net of the gospel, that one of them caught, that is, converted, three thousands souls at once. Who, save the Spirit of life and power, could of a persecuting blaspheming Pharisee, make such an unwearied zealous preacher of Christ's righteousness, as the apostle Paul was? This righteousness is brought near, doctrinally, to all who hear the gospel, or have the Bible; but powerfully, and savingly, only to such as believe.

Now if any are so curious as to inquire, why such a righteousness has not all along been carried both doctrinally and savingly to all mankind, I answer, To every individual soul for whom it was designed by the Father, and was wrought out by the Son, it hath all along, and shall to the end of time, be savingly revealed: and as for others, they have all along, in every place where the gospel has been preached, poured the utmost contempt upon it; so that to send it doctrinally, where God has not a chosen people, is to expose it. Now, how few soever God's chosen people were before the flood, and were all along under the Old Testament, and still are under the New; yet, under the latter day glory, they will appear to be many as the drops of dew, and as the sand upon the sea shore; especially if the thousand years of Satan's binding, and of the church's refreshment, mentioned in the Revelations, be a thousand of prophetic years; during which long space of time, elect sinners shall fly as a cloud, and flock unto Christ as doves to their windows. To be sure, the numbers of God's elect, when all of

them shall be brought safe to happiness, will be such as shall be most for the manifestation of the glory of each divine person, and of all the divine perfections: a congregation too great for any man to number, even "ten thousand times ten thousand," which is a hundred millions: "and thousands of thousands," Rev. v. 11, that is, millions without number. In comparison with whom they in hell are dropped, and no mention is made of them, where we read of the winding up of dispensations; "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." So extensive, and so glorious will the reign of grace be in superabounding, where sin in such numberless number of instances hath abounded: for, if the persons pardoned cannot be numbered, much less can their sins be so, that are forgiven them.

To distinguish aright between the letter of both Testaments, and the Spirit of power, which accompanies the preaching of the gospel, as it is revealed in both Testaments, and makes it become effectual, is of the utmost consequence: for though the letter of the gospel is suited to us, as we are rational creatures; yet such is the blindness of the sinner's mind, through sin, and the hardness of his heart, that instead of giving life, it kills; whereas the promised Spirit, who is a Spirit of light, life, and power, suits us, as we are dead in sins, and without strength. The apostle thus distinguishes, and so should we: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," 2 Cor. iii. 6. By the letter of the word, God is drawing us with the cords of a man, which is his own phrase, "I drew him with the cords of a man," Hos. xi. 4. To which cords I would refer all gospel calls and invitations, exhortations and dehortations; and those most solemn protestations, that he delights not in the death of sinners. "Say to them, as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And the most condescending of entreaties; "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20. And those strong arguings; "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfies not? Hearken diligently to me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," Isa. lv. 2. As in Scripture there is the language of creation due, such as that to Cain, "If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Gen. iv. 7; so there is the language of

the law, as a rule of walk; which is the very best consideration of the moral law, which was written as a rule of duty on the hearts and consciences of our first parents before God entered into covenant with them, of which the apostle speaks; "Who show the works of the law written upon their hearts," Rom. ii. 15. There is also the language of the law, as a covenant of works; which is, Do this, and live; "Or, the man that does these things shall live in them," Rom. x. 15. There is also a language of the law, as a broken covenant, which includes the thunders of Sinai, and tells us what sin is, and what it deserves, and is, according to the righteous judgment of God, due to sinners for their sins; how he might have appointed all to wrath, instead of appointing any to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ. Under this head is included the language due to free-will, though fallen, of which the law takes no notice, to make any abatements. The greatest part of Scripture language is that of Sinai, which is adapted to show to sinners both their want of Christ, and his worth. This takes in the doctrinal part of Scripture, with all its calls and invitations, its motives and encouragements, with all its absolute promises; such as that great word of promise, which has all along been, and shall, to the end of time, be made good to the whole election of the Father's grace; "I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people," Heb. viii. 10. The full birth of which fruitful promise is reserved till the dawn of latter-day glory, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel be saved: at present we see but the first fruits of electing love; the full vintage will not be till the glory of the Lord, as it shines forth in the face, and in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be so revealed, that all flesh shall see it together. In the mean while, we, who preach the gospel, are to publish it in general terms, leaving it to the Spirit, to make special application thereof to the chosen people. Thus Christ preached it; "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. And so should we, of whose success in so doing we read; "The election has obtained it," Rom. xi. 7. And of their acceptance; "For we are to God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish," 2 Cor. ii. 15. We may safely conclude, that as the numbers of the elect are such as shall, in the end, be found to be most for the manifestation of his glory, who chose them, so is every circumstance relating to them; such as the time of their birth into this world, as well as the time of their being born again, and brought safe to glory.

The usual way of the Spirit, in bringing near Christ's righteousness to the hearts and consciences of God's elect, is to erect such a tribunal in the court of conscience, as all the business

and pleasures of life cannot hush or bribe; before which the most bold and daring of sinners, how careless and secure soever they may for many years have been, are secretly cited, and cannot help making their appearance; where their past lives and actions are called over, and their very hearts and natures looked into; and they are tried not only by the letter, but by the spirituality of the law, and found to be rebels in heart and life; and as such, to be worthy of death, not only temporal, but eternal. Thus they, who once dreamed of nothing but ease and impunity, become self-condemned, and continue terrified, and in distress, till they are led by the word and Spirit to Christ, as "the end of the law for righteousness, to every man who believes; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the richness of the Father's grace;" by acting faith in whom, though it be but a faith of reliance, the storms raised in their consciences, by a sight and sense of sin, are stilled, and they are made thankful, as well as easy, and so fitted to run in the ways of God's commands. They, by the same Spirit that teaches them to lay aside the temper of the Pharisee, and not to work for life, either by way of merit or atonement, are enabled to work from life, and consequently to do more and better work for God, than all the children of men do besides: so that God's handful of corn, on the top of the mountains, is made to shake like Lebanon; and they of the city, that is, of Zion, are brought to flourish, like the grass upon the earth.

Thus God, who was with Christ in bringing in this righteousness, teaches, by his word and Spirit, all the chosen people submission to it; who thankfully receive it, and from the heart rest upon and plead it, as their sole justifying righteousness with and before God, the Judge of all: by being made light in the Lord, they are brought to see both their want, and the worth of this righteousness; and, by being made a willing people, they are brought to cast anchor upon it. As the apostle did, so do they, from the day of their conversion, "desire to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ; even the righteousness which is of God by faith."

I shall conclude this discourse, by putting God's justified ones upon acting a kind becoming part towards all mankind, that is, pleading the promise of the Spirit for all flesh. This, in a way of eminency, is called the promise of the Father under the New Testament: "But wait for the promise of the Father," says Christ, Acts i. 4; as the promise of the Messiah was the promise of the Father under the Old: and as Old Testament saints pleaded day and night the one, so should New Testament saints be as instant and constant in pleading the other; for it is by making good this word of promise, that the man of sin is



to be destroyed, "Whom the Lord shall destroy by the Spirit of his mouth, and by the brightness of his coming," 2 Thess. ii. 8. The fulness of the Gentiles is to be brought in, and all Israel is to be saved. They who are made the righteousness of God in their justification, and, in that sense, are clothed with the sun, should endeavour to be of as public use and service, in a spiritual sense, as the sun is in a natural; whose light and influences are not restrained to any place, nor part of the globe, but reach and enlighten, at due seasons, as well as cherish the whole earth. Thus should the prayers of New Testament saints, for the pourings forth of the Spirit, as he is Christ's glorifier, reach the pagan parts of the world, that they may be brought to cast their idols to the moles, and to the bats: they should also reach the Mahometan parts of the world, that they may no longer be imposed upon by that false and filthy prophet, Mahomet, but be brought thankfully to exchange the Koran for the Bible: thus should they reach the Antichristian parts of the world, that seventy millions of souls, which Papists are computed to be, may no longer carry the mark of the beast in their foreheads, but be brought to hate the whore, and make her desolate: they should also reach God's ancient people the Jews, who, concerning the gospel, are enemies, for our sakes, because that was, by the express command of God, preached to the Gentiles; but, as touching the election, they are beloved, for the Father's sake; or as they once were a chosen people, and shall as certainly be called, as they are for a time rejected, whose call will be like life from the dead. Thus for believers to ply the throne, and to plead the promise of the Spirit, is to become public blessings to mankind, greater blessings than most imagine. A saint thus plying the throne, in a cottage, may be, and is of greater consequence than many a prince on the throne.

To encourage New Testament saints thus to plead this great promise, Christ spoke those sweet words: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Mat. vii. 11. Were it as natural for man to desire to be useful, as it is to be famous in his generation, we who believe should give the God and Father of Christ no rest, till the Spirit, from on high, is poured forth upon all flesh. Believing parents cannot pray to greater, nor to better purpose, for those dear parts of themselves, their children, than to beg for them the Spirit, as he is Christ's glorifier; nor believing children for their respected parents. Thus should all the saints pray for all in authority, and all godly magistrates pray for all they rule: thus should all gospel ministers beg him, for the churches committed to their care; and church members beg him for their pastors: thus should godly relations and friends beg him for one

another; even masters for their servants, and servants for their masters. Such prayers put up in faith, would not return to us empty, but soon bring down such a blessing upon us and ours, as should turn our declining autumn, in a spiritual sense, into a promising spring. Would any gladly know the principal cause of those many gray hairs, in a spiritual sense, which, in town and country, are upon persons professing godliness, upon families and churches? I should return this short answer: the promise of the Spirit is not pleaded as it ought to be by us of the New Testament; neither do we desire and expect him, under his New Testament character, which is that of Christ's glorifier; "He shall glorify me," says Christ. Christ's glorifier, being our Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter, should encourage all the followers of the Lamb to wait and to watch for him, more than they who watch for the morning; and to look up as duly as the morning light appears, for a fresh anointing, to enable them, becomingly, like God's pardoned and justified ones, to perform the duties, to bear the burdens, and to resist the temptations of every day. This is the way to be filled with his comforts, and with his fruits; such as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, with which the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, should abound, that he may be glorified.

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### SERMON III.

**GALATIANS ii. 16.**—Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but, by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

THE gospel is deservedly called the *glorious gospel* of the *blessed God*; "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which is committed to my trust," 1 Tim. i. 11. For according to it, such as believe are *made partakers of a divine nature*, in their regeneration, are *made the righteousness of God*, in their justification, and bear the image of the heavenly Adam, as to their sanctification; they are one spirit with the Lord whilst on earth, and are to be for ever with him above in heaven. These are some of the principal parts of that great salvation, which is brought to light in the gospel: whence it is plain, that Adam, at the head of a covenant of works, with this world under his feet, was no more than the morning star: the shining of which is very inconsiderable, if compared with Christ, the sun of righteousness. The first Adam, bright as he might be, in his first rising, soon set in dismal darkness, which has covered the earth ever since; whereas Christ, the second Adam, is so

risen in the first promise, as never to set, but has filled both Testaments with his glory; and thus he rises, never to set in the hearts of all his saints, whom he will bring off, more than conquerors above in glory. Now, as of all the organs of the body, the eye is best suited to take in the beauty of this lower world; so is faith, of all the graces of the Spirit, best suited to take in the glory of Christ. This leads me to the fourth thing I proposed.

4. I shall say something concerning the *use* of *faith* in the business of a sinner's justification before God. That we are *justified by faith*, is incontestibly a Scripture phrase; it is twice used in the words of my text, and very often elsewhere; especially in the New Testament, where we are told, that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5; that is, to the obtaining of righteousness, as the preposition directs us to interpret it; and that "it shall be thus imputed to all who believe," verse 24. The conclusion drawn by the apostle, in that short, but excellent discourse, concerning a sinner's justification before God, in the third chapter of his epistle to the Romans, is very remarkable; "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law," Rom. iii. 28, which Scripture phrase is not only repeated, but doubled, in the next verse, save one: "Seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith," ver. 30, and is lifted up like a standard in the beginning of the next chapter: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. v. 1, who is said to be "the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes," Rom. x. 4, whose righteousness, though it was wrought out, and is laid up with Christ for us, before we believe, is no where spoken of in Scripture, as being *to* and *upon* us, till such time as we believe; "But now the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, to all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference," Rom. iii. 21, 22. It is not here said, that the comfort flowing from this righteousness is *within* such as believe, which sometimes is, and at other times is not, but that the righteousness itself is *upon* them. Thus often is this phrase used by the apostle, in his epistle to the Romans.

It is also as often used by him, in his epistle to the erring Galatians; twice, as has been observed, in the words of my text, and oftener in the following chapter; "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness," Gal. iii. 6. "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith," verse 8, which is as good as repeated: "So then they who be of faith," that is, who are

justified by faith, "are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 9. As is that other phrase, "But that no man is justified by the law, in the sight of God, is evident; for the just by faith shall live," verse 11. He goes on to tell us, in the same chapter, that "the Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them that believe," verse 22, and that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith," verse 24. He unbosoms himself, and lays open the desires of his own heart in this weighty affair, in his epistle to the Philippians; "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. In which place he not only desires to have the peace and comfort which flows from this righteousness, but the righteousness itself, which is by faith; so that to be justified by faith, is a Scripture phrase.

But we no where read of being justified *for our* faith, nor of our being justified *before* faith; neither of these are Scripture phrases; they who should use them, would teach in words never used by Christ and his apostles, in teaching doctrines which must be expressed in new words, and not in those wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which fill both Testaments. How empty, even of sense, would my text be, were its language thus changed? "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but before the faith of Jesus Christ; we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified before we believe." And how empty of the gospel should we read them, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but for the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Christ, that we might be justified for our faith in Christ?" It is, doubtless, safest, as in walk and worship, so in words and phrases, to keep close to the rule of Scripture, and in the things of God, to speak as do the oracles of God; which no Arian or Arminian ever did, or can do. All new schemes call for a new Bible, and errors of all sorts coin new words and phrases. What the heart is in the body, which is first formed, and first moves, that is faith in the new creation; it is first formed, as it were, or at least is first actuated, and drawn forth towards Christ, as he is God's salvation. Regeneration therefore is, for the comfort of babes in Christ, described by the lowest act of faith unfeigned; "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," John v. 2, which new birth, small as it may appear at the first to be, though but like the dawn of the morn, is "the kingdom of God within us."

The use and office of faith, in the business of a sinner's justification before God, is not to piece out the glorious robe of Christ's suretiship imputed righteousness; but the faith of the

operation of God points out the persons for whom this righteousness is designed by the Father, and was wrought out by the Son; which may be said of a work of grace in general, and belongs to faith in common with other graces. Faith therefore has a further office, or is of further use in our justification; for it is as the *eye* of the new creature, by the realizing acts of which the soul takes in the suitableness and worth of the wedding garment, which appears to be rather a rag, or a cobweb, than a robe, to the most knowing of the children of men, till faith is wrought. It is also the new creature's *hand*, by which it receives and puts on this garment of salvation, so perfumed with love, the folds of which are so full of grace and truth. *The gift of righteousness*, as it is called, Rom. v. 17, must have an hand to receive it; and *the robe of righteousness*, which is the name given it, Isa. lxi. 10, must be put on, and worn before God: they who, under a sense of sin, are summoned by the court of conscience to appear before God, as a Judge, must have something to plead with, and before his Majesty. Now, as Christ's righteousness is our alone effectual plea for pardon and acceptance, so faith is as the *lip* of the new creature, by which this righteousness is with all humility urged and pleaded: to do which we are encouraged by Scripture declarations, calls, and commands, as well as by examples, and are heard, though it is done by us, as with stammering, as well as with trembling lips. Faith is also as the *ear* of the new creature, by which the awakened, quickened soul listens to the Lord Jesus Christ, calling upon the very chief of sinners to forsake their sins, and all refuges of lies, and hiding places of falsehood, and to look to him as the only finisher of sin, and fulfiller of righteousness, for all righteousness to bring them into, and to continue them in a pardoned, justified, reconciled, adopted state for ever. It is also as the *knee* of the new creature, by which it bows before Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, and submits, though not without some reluctance, especially at times, to this way of a sinner's justification before God. It is also as the *tongue* of the new creature, which shouts, *Grace, grace*, as to the whole of our salvation, so to this branch of a sinner's justification, and sings the praises, as of its provider, so of him that brought in our justifying righteousness. It is also as the *foot* of the new creature, by which it walks with, and follows after Christ, as the Lord its righteousness; and by so doing adorns the gospel, as well as evidences itself to be faith unfeigned.

So that the office of faith is to receive from, and not to bring to Christ, unless it be wants and weakness, ill and hell deservings, sins without number, and obligations to punishments without end. Of all the graces of the Spirit, faith is the most emptying, and accordingly goes empty, poor, and indigent to Christ. Other graces bring something, as it were, along with them;

whereas faith brings nothing to Christ but a naked back. As in nature the hand and the mouth are both of them adapted to receive, the one a gift, the other food; so is faith adapted to look to, receive, and to close with the Lord Jesus Christ; and, having received him, to realize all those Scripture motives, by which we are persuaded to abide with him, and to follow him: so that faith in the business of justification before God is not to be considered as a working, but as a receiving grace, though it is both, and sows in tears of godly sorrow, and works by love; but its first and great business is with the person and righteousness of Christ, particularly to receive the atonement.

To conclude this head. Faith may be said to justify us in a like sense, as the eye is said to be the light of the body, or the hand to feed and clothe us. Thus Esau is said to live by his bow, by which he got what he lived upon: it is by faith, which is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," that we realize all that is said in both Testaments concerning Christ and his righteousness. And as in nature the eye directs the hand, so here the realizing acts of faith direct its receiving acts; not but both are under the influences of the Spirit, and the direction of the word; by which faith is both taught and encouraged to go to God in Christ's name, as the finisher of sin, and fulfiller of all righteousness, and to plead his righteousness to all those blessed ends for which it was provided by the Father, wrought out by the Son, and is revealed by the Spirit; by doing which heartily and constantly, faith takes in the comfort, and is thereby stirred up to give God the glory of such provision of righteousness. It is also made careful to adorn, and concerned both to vindicate and to propagate the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, as the Lord our righteousness.

Having thus shown the use of faith in a sinner's justification before God, I shall next answer a three-fold inquiry.

(1.) One inquiry is, whether faith is only a *manifestation* of what was actually done from everlasting, as is usually pleaded by those who are for actual justification from everlasting. That faith of the operation of God is a manifestation of the following things, is readily granted: as that we were loved, and chosen, not barely with Christ as an elder brother, but as a head from everlasting, and given to and made his charge and care to bring us safe through the fall to glory: that in him, as in our head, and great representative, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places: that he actually sustained our persons, and represented them in the fulness of time; and that he finished our sins, and brought in for us everlasting righteousness; that for us he rose from the dead, ascended up into heaven, and is set down on the Father's right hand, where he ever lives to make intercession for us: of these things, faith is a ma-

nifestation, and so is a work of grace in general, as well as the grace of faith in particular; for, as in nature the eye laid to the smallest chink, may, through that, see the sun shining in its meridian strength, so in the case before us, an eye of faith may, by reflecting on itself, or on any other of the graces of the Spirit, though they spring up in the heart, but like a grain of mustard seed, look both backwards and forwards; backwards, to a being chosen in Christ from everlasting; and forwards to a living and reigning with Christ to everlasting. But though faith is a manifestation of God's eternal purposes taken in Christ, and his covenant transactions with him; yet, in the business of a sinner's justification, it must be more than a manifestation, for the following reasons:

[1.] Because the saints are said, in Scripture, to have *access by faith* into the grace wherein they stand: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand," Rom. v. 2, that is, we stand actually pardoned, and actually justified before God, as well as actually reconciled with God. These privileges, with all others of a like nature, were designed for the elect from everlasting, and given them in Christ, their Head, and great representative, before the world began; but they have not, according to the Scriptures, access to them, or a standing in them, as to their own persons, such as is actual and applicatory, till such time as they are born again, or believe. Thus the sun, moon, and stars, were lighted and hung up in the firmament, long before any of us were born, or had a bodily eye; but their light was not actually let in, or brought into us, no, not a single beam, till such time as the eye was formed, and we were born into this world; then, and not before, were we filled with the light of the natural sun, and were actually possessed of its rays to the several ends and uses for which they are given us. Thus gifts, how freely soever they may be designed for us, and given to us, are not ours before we receive them: there must be the receiving, as well as the giving hand, before the poor are actually possessed of the rich man's alms. Thus it is in the affair before us: Christ's righteousness is called a *gift*, which is received by faith: "How much more shall they, who receive an abundance of grace, and of the gifts of righteousness," Rom. v. 13, which sufficiently intimates, that though this gift of righteousness is destined for us, yet it is not ours, for our personal and actual justification, till we believe. It is not a pardon, in the king's design and purpose; nor in the secretary's office; nor in the messenger's hand; no, nor in the malefactor's pocket, that will set the criminal free, in the eye of the law: it must be produced and pleaded in open court. Now, both God's courts are still to be met with in the holy Scriptures; in the law is that of Sinai, and in the

gospel is that of Zion: faith of the operation of God appeals from that of Sinai to that of Zion, where it pleads this righteousness; and so doing, the guilty, self-condemned sinner is according to the rule of the word, really and actually acquitted, and declared righteous, with equal certainty, though not with like solemnity, as it will be declared in the last and great day of public judgment; and may, on sure Scripture grounds, take in the comfort, and give God the glory of so great a blessing, as a being freed from hell, and entitled to heaven, by being made the righteousness of God, in a way of union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Federal representation and vital union, a being represented by Christ, and a being united to the Lord Jesus Christ, must be different things; though the former is the foundation or ground-work of the latter. To be represented by Christ, belongs to the whole election of the Father's grace, long before they are either born, or born again; but united to Christ they are not, till they are born again; for it is impossible to be united to such a living, life-giving head as Christ is, and yet remain dead in sins. Dead sinners may be represented by Christ, and are so, even as many of them as belong to the election of the Father's grace; but not a soul that is united to Christ can remain dead in sins: "To whom coming, as to a living stone; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house," 1 Pet. ii. 4.

To have access into the grace of justification, and a standing therein, must be more than a manifestation: as the prodigal's being clothed with the best robe, and entering into his father's house, and sitting down at his father's table, was more than his seeing these things far off, and at a distance. This is one reason why faith, in the business of justification, must be more than a bare manifestation, which is wholly scriptural; and so is that which follows.

[2.] The double simile which the Spirit of God makes use of, in speaking of faith's use and office in this weighty affair, discovers it to be more than a manifestation: he compares it to a *hand*, as well as to an *eye*. How often are its receiving acts, as well as those that are realizing, mentioned in Scripture! "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on his name," John i. 12. "Much more shall they, who receive an abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement," Rom. v. 11. All which are Scripture phrases, as well as those by which the realizing acts of faith are held forth. Now, was faith only a manifestation, why should it be compared to a hand, as well as to an eye?

[3.] Faith in the business of justification, must be more than a manifestation, because were it no other, *other graces* would



share with faith, in its use and office, as it respects our justification; for they all speak by way of manifestation, and evidence our being loved, and chosen in Christ from everlasting; "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God: for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power," &c. 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. So that we might, with equal propriety of language, be said to be justified by repentance, or by love, or by humility, as by faith; which we are no where said to be in Scripture; such expressions would be unscriptural and unwarrantable: they would grate upon the ear, and grieve the heart of a true believer.

[4.] Faith, in the business of justification, is more than a manifestation, because were it no more, it would unavoidably follow, that *one believer* might be more justified, in the Scripture sense and acceptance of that word, than *another*, as his manifestation thereof may be clearer and fuller; and the same person more justified at one time, than at another, as his manifestation or apprehension thereof lessens or increases; of which we have not the least intimation in Scripture, but of the contrary. A believer's comfort may ebb and flow, but, in point of justification, his state is the same.

To conclude this first head of inquiry: Did the gospel phrase and notion of justification by faith, include no more than a manifestation to our sense and apprehension, it would also follow, that they who walk in darkness, and have lost the sight and sense of their being justified, which is the case of many a soul that is truly gracious, would, in the sense of the gospel, be no longer in a justified state, but be fallen from the grace of justification: a believer in the dark, would be no more justified, than he was whilst shut up in unbelief; all which is unscriptural, and smells rank of the Arminians, who hold a falling from grace.

(2.) I shall come to a second inquiry, Whether the believer may, in any sense, be said to be justified *before* faith. To which I would answer, Not actually, but virtually; in Christ, but not together with Christ; in designation and purchase, but not in application and fact. Christ's righteousness is designed and wrought out *for* him, but is not *to* nor *upon* him, in the sense of the gospel, before he believes: he is a son elect, but no more; "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them who believed on his name," John i. 12; this is a full proof they were not before what they then became, or began to be. That God purposed, from everlasting, thus to privilege and bless his people in time, is not questioned; nor that all the elect were virtually justified, when Christ, their great head and representative, was so actually. But as the Scripture carefully distinguishes between a being blessed in Christ, and a being blessed together with

Christ, so should we; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ," Eph. i. 3; which *all* must take in the blessings of glory, as well as those of grace: but though now we are glorified in Christ, we, who believe, hope one day to be glorified together with Christ; "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4. We readily own, that God had in purpose, from everlasting, all the glory and blessedness to which he will bring his people to everlasting; but to say, that the elect were, from everlasting, actually possessed of any one of them, actually pardoned, or actually justified, is to make them, or at least to speak of them, as if they were co-eternal beings with the eternal God.

How expressly are we told, in Scripture, that, in point of actual existence, "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual!" 1 Cor. xv. 46. And if so, the elect not only actually exist, but are actually condemned, by the law of God, before they are actually justified. As the imputation of Christ's righteousness presupposes the being of Him, who imputes, and his actually sustaining the character, both of a Judge and of a Saviour; so it presupposes the existence of the creature, and that he is a sinner to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed. As all the existence men or angels have before time, is in purpose, so all the imputation that is from everlasting, must be in purpose also. To talk of God's actually imputing a thing of that worth, as is Christ's righteousness, to nothing, or to that which has as yet no actual being, that he should actually impute righteousness to a *non ens*, or to one who as yet is not, is to talk not only unscripturally, but unintelligibly.

Though God designed, from everlasting, to give us an actual being, yet we did not actually exist, but in time: thus it is in the case before us; though God actually purposed, and that from everlasting, to justify the whole election of his grace, yet they are not actually justified, but in time. Christ's righteousness was both designed and wrought out for us, whilst lying in the womb of God's decrees, but is not upon us till we believe.

Not only designation and possession are different things, the one being a step to the other, but so are right and possession, quite round the globe. An estate may be designed for a first-born, whilst in the womb, and be bought for, and settled on him as soon as born; so firmly settled, as to leave no room for its being alienated, and yet the heir not be in actual possession thereof. Actual possession, be it of a crown, takes place according to the constitution of the kingdom, and the methods of government, which, in all wise administrations, are settled, and not left uncertain and precarious. Now is the order of civil govern-

ments great, and that of God's government of the world of nature yet greater; and is there no such thing as order in the gospel? Is that without beauty and method, which is the glory of all kingdoms? There, and no where else, must we look for the methods of wisdom, and the order of God, as they relate to the application of salvation. This proclaims, as on the house top, that though Christ's righteousness was wrought out for us, long before we believe, it is not upon us till we believe. Paul was a chosen vessel before he believed; but where is he said to have been pardoned, or justified, or reconciled, or adopted, whilst lying out from and persecuting the Lord Jesus Christ?

As the whole of our salvation by Christ, so this of a sinner's justification before God, is represented in Scripture, and should be considered by us, under different views; it is to be considered, as it lies in the gracious design and purpose of God, whose purposes, without his power, bring nothing into being; for, if they did, this world, with all the things of time, must have existed from everlasting; to assert which, would include the greatest of absurdities. It must be considered, as it lies in the covenant transactions between the Father and the Son, who was set up from everlasting, as the head and surety of a better covenant. It must be considered, as it lies in the purchase of Christ, who, in the fulness of time, "finished transgression, made an end of sin, and reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness," Dan. ix. 24. It must be considered, as it lies in the gospel, where Christ's righteousness is revealed, in the suitableness and glory thereof, and is expressly said to be *to all* and *upon all* such as believe, without difference, where it is brought near to sinners in the offer. A sinner's justification may and should be considered, as it is the birth of time, and so personal and actual, in the joyful and blessed application thereof.

Now, as salvation, in the designation thereof, is not to be blended with salvation in the impetration, nor with salvation in the application thereof, so neither is justification; but a real scriptural difference should carefully be kept up by us. The distinction of virtual and actual, has its use and place in Scripture, as well as in nature: in nature the case is plain; for the earth virtually contains all the fruit that will be brought forth and ripened, not only the next summer, but an hundred years hence; whence it follows not, that trees are now full of ripe fruit. The sea also virtually contains all fountains and rivers that can possibly flow from it, even as eternity contains all possible time. And no less plain is the case as to Scripture, where Christ is said to be a *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, which cannot be understood of his being actually crucified before he was born; but the *slaying* there mentioned, must be virtual, and not actual. It is one thing for Christ's right-

eousness to be wrought out, and laid up, as it were, for us; and a different thing to have this righteousness upon us, in the sense of the gospel. The coronation robes of a king, and the wedding garments of a bride or a bridegroom, are, or at least may be, made and finished long before they are put on and worn. Our wedding robe of justifying righteousness is with Christ our head as a garment completely finished, with whom it is safe and most secure; but it is far above and out of the sinner's sight and reach, till such time as it is given him, for this righteousness's sake, to believe; for faith, with all the graces of the Spirit, as well as glory, is the purchase of this righteousness; which, being seated in the heart, brings the soul off from all its refuges of lies, and hiding places of falsehood, to take shelter under the shadow of Christ's wing, as he is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes." Thus, "With the heart man believes to righteousness," Rom. x. 10, and is no longer among those whom the word of God condemns, but justifies, and is so declared to be, by the united voice of both Testaments.

God himself distinguishes between his own counsels, and the execution of them; "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlv. 10, which we have in other words; "The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand," Isa. xiv. 24. Who is said to work all things after the counsel of his own will; "In whom we also have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. God's counsels, as they lie in the divine mind and will, without the intervention of his power, bring nothing into being, as has been observed. In these counsels Christ himself lay, as man and Mediator, and was considered by God as the finisher of sin, and as the fulfiller of all righteousness; but this gave not an actual existence to the incarnation, death, or sufferings of Christ, before the fulness of time.

All the purposes of God, as they are in him, are immanent acts; his whole counsel is so, as it takes in his works of nature, grace, and glory. Now, if this, with the intervention of his power, gives actual being to any thing, to our justification, for instance, by a parity of reason, it should give actual being to every thing; to this world, and to all that is therein; to the church militant, and to the church triumphant. Things of time are otherwise considered by God, when actually existing, than they were by him, before his power had brought them into being: before they had a being they were considered by him as things to be; but when actually existing, as things that are; and yet, by reason of certainty, as to the execution of his decrees, he calls things which are not, as though they were. Pos-

sibles are considered by him as they lie in his almighty power, things future, as they lie in his sovereign will and pleasure; and things actually existing, as put forth and brought into being by him.

To conclude this head. We cannot be justified in the sense of the gospel before faith, because the word of God is express that *we are justified by faith*. Christ's righteousness is not upon us, in the sense of the gospel, before faith; for the gospel is express, that it is *to* and *upon* us, in a way of *believing*; and should men or angels tell us the contrary, we are not to regard them.

(3.) I shall add a word to the third and last inquiry. How is it that *elect infants, dying in their infancy*, are justified? I answer, By faith in the *habit*, though not by faith in the *act*. Faith of the operation of God is not confined to years; an elect infant is as capable a subject thereof as grown persons. As all are born shut up in unbelief, so omnipotent grace can open those prison doors when and how it pleases. In the short account which we have of salvation, in the application thereof, as it respects the whole election of the Father's grace, they are said to be first called, and so justified, and then glorified; "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 30. Now, an elect infant is as capable of this as a grown person; of being effectually called, or renewed by grace; of being freely justified, and for ever glorified.

All the application I would make, shall be adding two words, by way of inquiry. Where is it that you have lodged your guilty souls? and what is it that you have done with your many sins?

1. Where have you lodged your guilty souls? Hiding places of falsehood are many; these are crowded; sinners flock to them by thousands. God's hiding place is but one, but one under both Testaments; where Abraham took shelter, who saw Christ's day, as the only sacrifice for sin; and Moses, whose dispensation was full of him; and David, with all the prophets, who wrote of him; there did the apostle Paul also shelter himself. Old and New Testament saints sought righteousness to justification and life, only in the Lord; "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. Christ's wing, as the finisher of sin and the fulfiller of all righteousness, which spreads itself throughout the whole book of God, is the one and only shelter for guilty sinners. Had a stung Israelite, instead of looking out to the brazen serpent, gone to prayer, would he have been cured? No, surely. Now, did God put such honour upon his own ordinance, under the Old Testament, and will he not put

as great honour upon his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, under the New, who is his salvation to the end of time, as well as to the ends of the earth? Cornelius bade as fair for salvation, out of Christ, as any man living; for the angel told him that "his prayer was heard, and his alms had in remembrance in the sight of God;" and yet he also told him, that Peter was to inform him how he and his house should be saved; "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved," Acts xi. 14, which is a plain case, and a full proof, that out of Christ there is no salvation. Cornelius's case is so far from depreciating Christ and his gospel, that both are thereby exalted; and thus the light and law of nature cannot supply the want of Christ. Were there such a man as Cornelius now alive, an angel, or some one acquainted with the gospel, would be sent to preach Christ to him, though he lived in the furthest and darkest corner of the earth.

2. What have you done with your many sins? The only care of some is, to extenuate their sins, and of others to forget them; but all who have faith unfeigned, wash in that fountain, which God has opened for sin and for uncleanness: all other lavers are so far from cleansing, that they pollute and defile the soul; it is *the blood of Jesus Christ, God's own and only begotten Son, that cleanses from all sin*, 1 John i. 7, the conscience from the guilt, and the heart from the love, and the life from the rule and dominion of sin.

But you will say, it may be, that you would gladly thus take shelter under the wing of Christ, and thus wash in the blood of Christ; but you fear your faith is forced and feigned. To which I answer; how is it that your faith sows; and how is it that it works? Does it sow in tears of godly sorrow for sin; and does it work by love? If it does both these, you may rest assured it is faith of the right kind, and that you shall reap in joy.

To conclude: with all your gettings, your first and chief care should be to get faith, which has so many precious promises made to it; not only of salvation and eternal life, in the general, but of forgiveness of sin, of justification, of reconciliation, of adoption, and of sanctification in particular; to work which the Spirit is promised, and the Scriptures are written; to give which Christ is exalted, and a throne of grace is erected. Remember, *faith comes by hearing*, not the sayings of a Plato, or of a Seneca, but the word of God, as it is contained in the Bible; which is a book so prefaced, as no other book is, and so attested: for the Old Testament is prefaced by Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, and by all the miracles wrought by the hand of Moses, in bringing it about, which was effected before the five books of Moses were written; and the New Testament, by all the miracles wrought by Christ: who was born, crucified, raised from

the dead, and ascended up into heaven, before any of that was written: and as it is a book so prefaced as a book never was, so never was book so well attested as the Bible is; not only by a cloud of witnesses, or by the experience of all the saints, both dead and alive, who have found, and still find, in numberless instances, these things to be facts and truths, which are therein related; or by miracles of all sorts, and by a cloud of martyrs, who, by thousands, have sealed with their blood what they knew of its being the book of God, or of the truths contained therein; but it is gloriously attested, by being undeniably written on the palms of God's hands in his providential dispensations; who, to go no higher, in the rise, succession, riches, and duration of the four universal monarchies, has been fulfilling Scripture prophecy; and so he has in the rejection and present state of the Jews, who many days have been without a king, a sacrifice, and an idol, according to Scripture prophecy. How exactly is the New Testament a fulfilling of the Old; and not only the present state of Europe, as to its divisions into ten kingdoms; the kings of which have, according to Scripture prophecy, given away their power to the beast; but the present state of all the world is visibly a fulfilling of Scripture prophecy! Are not the Jews, at this day, the scattered and the despised people the Scriptures say they should be? Is not Antichrist the long-lived man of sin, and the cruel man of blood, the Scriptures say he should be? Are not the pagan parts of the world the dark places, and the habitations of cruelty, the Scripture says they should be? Do not the seven Asiatic churches lie desolate, as they were threatened by Christ, unless they repented? Is not Mahomet the false prophet the Scriptures say he should be? and are not his followers many, like the waters of a great river, the river Euphrates, to which they are compared in Scripture? Does not the whole world lie in wickedness, as the Scriptures say it does? And is not every saint as a brand plucked out of the burning, as the Scriptures say they are? Are not the deists the scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and ridiculing the promise of Christ's coming, as the Scriptures say they should? Are not the black marks of those perilous times, the last days, upon us? Are not the foolish virgins as many, nay more, than the wise? And are not all slumbering and sleeping, as the Scriptures say they would be?—Let us therefore prize the book of God, as a king does his crown, and hold it fast as a king does his sceptre: let us lay it up in the cabinet of the heart, and express it throughout the whole of our lives: let us view Christ and ourselves, his wisdom and our own folly; his righteousness, and our own guilt; his riches, and our own poverty; his fulness, and our own emptiness; his strength, and our own weakness, in the light thereof; in this the finite worth of Christ, and the true value of grace, and use of faith, and of every thing else, is

faithfully set down; according to which, "All who believe are justified, from all things from which there was no being justified by the law of Moses," Acts xiii. 39.

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## SERMON IV.

**GALATIANS ii. 16.**—Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

By far the greatest of all sublunary transactions, with an eye to which the foundations of the first Adam's world were laid, was, as we learn from Scripture, the appearing of Christ, the second Adam, to take away sin. His incarnation is spoken of in both Testaments, as the foundation and chief corner-stone of God's world of nature, as well as of his kingdom of grace and glory. In the Old Testament, "I have put my words in thy mouth, and covered thee in the shadow of my hand," said God to the Mediator, "that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth; and say to Zion, Thou art my people," Isa. li. 16; that is, do it with the greatest certainty, so as to receive from all a full revenue of glory. In the New Testament we are told, that "all things were created by Christ, and that by him all things consist," Col. i. 16, 17.

As man was created the mouth of this lower creation, in point of praise, and in point of service as the hand thereof; for what would this world have signified, had no man been formed to adore, and serve him that made it? so our Immanuel is as the hand in point of service; therefore he is called *the man of God's right hand*, Psal. lxxx. 17, and in point of praise he is as the mouth of the whole universe. By him God receives, and will receive for ever, such a revenue of glory, as could no other way have been paid to him. Mere creatures, whether they are men or angels, being mutable by nature, may praise God, and serve him one day, and be struck dumb to praise, and grow lame to his service the next, as in the case of the non-elect angels, and of our first parents; whereas our Immanuel is "the same yesterday, to-day; and for ever;" and, as such, is a fit basis to support the whole universe. Is it beneath the wisdom of a king to order his palace to be built on a quick sand, or his crown and sceptre to be made of glass? and will God entrust reeds and rushes, that is, mere creatures, with the manifestation of his glory? Firm and strong as the pillars of heaven, and of this earth may be, they owe all their stability and strength to Christ, and so do elect men and angels theirs,



in answering the ends, the one of their creation, the other of their redemption; to the same Jesus, who is said, "to bear up the pillars of the earth," Psal. lxxv. 3, and "to uphold all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3, which includes heaven as well as earth; and is called, by God, "his righteous servant, in whom he will be glorified," Isa. xlix. 3. That Christ should be able, in the short space of thirty odd years, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sin, and reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, is a like wonder, with God's creating such a world as this is, in the space of six days. How will it astonish and delight us, when we come to glory, to think, that the Lord of heaven and earth should be the Lord our righteousness! that he, who there sits on the Father's throne, should, to bring about our justification and salvation, consent to hang in this lower world on a tree! Between his righteousness being upon us for our actual justification, and faith of the operation of God, there is, for the comfort of all who believe, a close connexion, which is my next head of discourse.

5. I shall evince the *sure connexion* there is between faith and actual justification.

There is an eternal connexion in God's purposes and decrees, who has said, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Men and devils may sooner invert the beautiful order of nature, and extinguish sun, moon, and stars, than disannul what the purpose of God has thus connected: there is also an eternal connexion by way of covenant, it being thus agreed in the counsel of peace between the Father and the Son: there is also a purchased connexion, obtained and sealed, as it were, by the blood of Christ: there is an openly declared connexion, published in the book of God, and by the ministers of the gospel, to all the world: there is a promised connexion confirmed by oath; for the oath of God, as it is recorded in his word, reaches and confirms every truth contained therein, whereby all gospel immunities, privileges, and blessings, are abundantly secured to such as believe. It is also an experienced connexion; all, in all ages and places, that ever believed, whether saints of the Old, or of the New Testament, have, without one exception, been justified; and so are all who now believe justified, let their lot be cast where it will; babes, as well as fathers in Christ; and so shall all who, in after ages, to the very end of time, shall be brought to believe; for that great text looks forward as well as backward: "By him all who believe are justified, from all things," Acts iii. 39. Should such of us as believe, be declared justified, by an audible voice from heaven, or by an angel sent from thence, it would not be so satisfying, nor so establishing, as the united testimony of Moses, and of all the prophets; of Christ, and of all his apostles, as it

stands recorded in both Testaments. We may safely say, that the earth may sooner sink under our feet, and the heavens over our heads vanish, than a true believer be condemned; which connexion is thus settled and secured, that we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel. This connexion I take to be part of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which makes every true believer "free from the law of sin and death," Rom. viii. 2.

6. My next province is to assign to *good works* their *proper use* in this weighty affair, according to the Scriptures, which are most express, in excluding the best works performed by the best of saints, from being either in whole, or in part, our justifying righteousness before God. Thus Abraham's works, though very excellent in themselves, are carefully excluded; "What shall we say then, that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? for if Abraham was justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but he was not so justified before God," Rom. iv. 2. That this is the sense and meaning of this verse, is plain from the next; "For what says the Scripture, Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness," verse 3. His readiness to offer his son, by way of sacrifice, at God's command, was a high instance of obedience; but this was not counted to him for righteousness, as to be sure it would have been, and set as in the front of Abraham's good works, had they been either in whole, or in part, his justifying righteousness before God. David's resolution to make mention of God's righteousness, and of that only, must be exclusive of all those works of righteousness, which might be called his own. Thus the apostle's desire to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, excludes not only some, but all those works of righteousness he had wrought, or should maintain, to the very end of life, though he was a tree of righteousness, more and more loaded therewith. His saying, "not of works, lest any man should boast," bars them from being part of our justifying righteousness before God; and so does that other text, "Now to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5. But we need go no further than my text for the full proof of this: it was in primitive times, a known truth, which none disputed, that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. We may safely conclude, therefore, as the apostle does, that "we are justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; for by the law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. iii. 20. The dagger that gives the wound, may as soon cure it, as the law justify any: such as thus seek to be justified, are so far from attaining their end, that they are doctrinally *fallen from grace*, Gal. v. 4, and do as much as in them lies,

to make the death of Christ vain and ineffectual, Gal. ii. 21. Good works, how spiritual soever they may be, are not a valuable consideration laid down by us, for the robe of Christ's righteousness; which can no more be purchased by us, than the power of giving the Holy Ghost could by Simon the sorcerer. Such a purchase would aggrandize the saint, to the depreciating of the Saviour, whose righteousness is called a *gift*, but not once a *sale*, in Scripture; neither are good works our warrant to look to Christ for righteousness, to justification and life. To bar this, we are told, as has been observed, how it is, that, as to ourselves, we are considered by God, when he justifies any, not as saints, but as sinners: *But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* Our warrant to receive Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, is not human, but divine; the call and promise of the gospel, and not any worth or worthiness in us; *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.*

But though the best of works are no part of our justifying righteousness before God, all good works evidence our being among the number of God's justified ones. This they do, as they speak our faith to be unfeigned; a faith of the right kind, which works by love: they also do it, as they speak our union to Christ to be real, that we are truly one spirit with the Lord; so that good works evidence our justification, as good fruit evidences the goodness of the tree; and as streams that are sweet, speak the sweetness of the fountain.

7. I shall next consider, whether the *law* is of any use in the business of a sinner's justification before God, and show of what use it is. The moral law is the great standard of all righteousness: had not Christ's suretiship righteousness come up, in every point, to this perfect rule, neither he himself, as Mediator, nor any of his, could have been justified; the curse of which law, as a broken covenant, reaches sinners of all ranks and degrees, whilst lying out from Christ: it is therefore of no small use, in the hand of the Spirit, to awaken those of God's elect, where the gospel comes; by which they are not only struck dumb and silenced, as to all pleas, by way of excuse, but dead, as to all hopes of establishing a justifying righteousness of their own. Thus the apostle Paul, who, whilst a dead Pharisee, was alive in his own conceit, without the law; when that came in its spirituality and extent, sin so revived, as to the sense of it, that he died; and the commandment, which was originally ordained to life, and was so given to our first parents, he found to be to death; for instead of justifying, by it is the knowledge of sin, and consequently it must of necessity condemn the sinner: this holds true of all laws, if transgressed; but more especially of the moral.

I shall observe of what use the *written word* is in this weighty affair, of which the law and light of nature knew nothing before the fall, the whole thereof being matter of pure revelation: "If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?" Gen. iv. 7, is the language of creation-due; but our being justified by faith, and accepted to eternal life, in the Beloved, is all of grace, and the peculiar language of the gospel. Both Testaments are full of the glory of Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, and of encouragement to seek to him for all righteousness, to bring us into, and to continue us in a pardoned, justified, reconciled, adopted state for ever: both Testaments also testify, that "in the Lord shall all the believing seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isa. xlv. 24, whose faith, in opposition to the popish notion of believing as the church believes, is described by knowledge: "By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many," chap. xliii. 11, of which we have a more full and particular account in the New Testament, especially in the epistle to the Romans, where this righteousness is called a *gift*; and is, in so many words, said "to be to all, and upon all them that believe, and that without difference; as really to all justifying intents and purposes upon Abraham's believing seed, as upon Abraham the father of the faithful; as really upon New Testament saints, as upon those of the Old; as really upon us, at this distance of time, as upon primitive saints, and the apostles themselves; as really upon babes, as upon fathers in Christ. Were Moses, and all the prophets, upon earth; was Paul, with all the apostles, here; and should the true believer ask them their thoughts concerning his state, they would unanimously declare him a justified person: one freed from all condemnation on the one hand, and entitled to heaven, on the other. God's written word is full of the excelling worth of this righteousness, and of the gracious designs of God in providing it; how and to what ends it is upon us who believe, and with what certainty and success. There we have the Father's testimony concerning his Son, as the Lord our righteousness, and his command to us to hear him; whose calls and counsels direct to Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness, and whose charge is to go no where else. In a word, we are taught the one and only way of a sinner's justification before God; and, by the same word, we are directed and encouraged to get into it, and to abide therein. Here the purposes of God are put into promises, that faith may go to a throne of grace, and plead them. Grace in the heart and purpose of God, is like gold in the mine; but grace in the promise, be it those promises which relate to our justification, or any other gospel privilege, is like gold in the mint; it is ours to traffic with, in a spiritual sense.

I shall next consider the use of *conscience*, in this momentous affair. In this court, the law keeps its register, as it relates to

duty, and to sin; and the justice of God an account of the numbers, and aggravating circumstances of every sinner's sins, how great sinners they are in the eye of the law, and what is due to them, according to the righteous judgment of God, for their sins. Here God's testimony concerning his Son is received, when this court is purged and renewed; and our believing with the heart is noted or set down. All the witnesses to a believer's justification are heard in this court, and all objections against it are here canvassed and answered. In this court, the world, the flesh, and the devil, lodge their accusations against the believer, drawn from the strength of his corruptions, and from the weakness of his faith; and here it is that they are removed: so that this court, which was once full of bribes, and false reports, as well as with false witnesses, being renewed by the Spirit of Christ, and sprinkled with his blood, is, less or more, filled with peace and with joy in believing. This matchless robe of righteousness has in the folds thereof peace with God; and all clothed therewith may and should rejoice in the hope of his glory: they should also glory in tribulation, and call the world's frowns theirs, as well as its smiles; adversity, as well as prosperity; and death itself, as well as life. This they are enabled, in some good measure, to do; when he, who searches the deep things of God, is pleased to shine in upon their graces, and to shed abroad the love of God, in the provision and gift of this righteousness in their hearts, and to witness with their spirits that therein they are made the righteousness of God; who, as he is Christ's glorifier, never sets his seal to a blank for the world, the flesh, and the devil, to fill up at pleasure, as some libertines would persuade themselves and others; but first renews and works faith, and so witnesses to his own work: in the light of whose witnessing presence the robe of Christ's righteousness appears to be most glorious, and all clothed therewith to be most safe and happy; by which their doubts are answered, and all their fears are scattered, and they go on their way rejoicing. Instead of sinning, they are brought to obey, with a high hand of filial love and reverence; and find, by blessed experience, that the joy of the Lord is their strength, to bear, as well as to do his will. As the least mote makes the eye water, so the least sin makes the conscience, that is sprinkled with the blood of Christ, smite; other consciences may be scrupulous, but these only are truly tender.

IV. My last work shall be to guard against *errors* of all sorts in the business of a sinner's justification before God.

The law, as a covenant of works, was our first husband; to it, as such, we were all espoused in the first Adam; the language of which is, *Do this, and live*. Now, though the law is weak, through the flesh, and cannot possibly justify any, but is strong to condemn; yet such is the pride of every natural man's heart,

that he had much rather, with the carnal Jews, go to Sinai, than to Zion, for a justifying righteousness; and, with the Papists, be at any costs and pains to establish a justifying righteousness of his own, than to submit to Christ's.

I shall begin with the error of the Jews, particularly of the proud conceited Pharisees, in the business of justification before God. Of this we have the best account, both from the pen and from the practice of the apostle Paul, whilst a Pharisee: from his pen; "What shall we say then? that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness: wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law," Rom. iv. 30. They were for a Sinai covenant and righteousness, and not for that of mount Zion. Though they were a generation of vipers, and whited sepulchres, especially the Pharisees; yet they were for establishing a justifying righteousness of their own, as is evident, beyond all contradiction; "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God," chap. x. 3. We have also a full account of this from the apostle's practice, whilst a Pharisee, of which he gives a very particular account, in his third chapter to the Philippians: he has told us what pains he took, and how great a proficient he was, in the school of the law, as a covenant: "Touching the righteousness which is of the law blameless," Phil. iii. 6. This is last mentioned, because he verily thought, whilst he was a blind Pharisee, that it added weight and worth to all these external privileges he there enumerated: but upon his being made light in the Lord, he spoke in a quite different language; "That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. From Christ's parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, it appears that the righteousness which the former trusted to, and pleaded before God, was a comparative righteousness; "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are," Luke xviii. 11.

I shall next consider the error which infected the churches of *Galatia*, in the business of justification before God; which was this; they joined together mount Sinai and mount Zion, and blended the two dispensations, that of the law and that of the gospél, and put the veil of Moses over the face, or gospel, of Jesus Christ, in the business of justification before God. This is the least that can be said of their mistake; though it is plain, from the two following texts, that they took wider and worse steps, in joining the works, both of the moral and of the ceremonial law, with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord our righteous-

ness, who is the end of both for righteousness, to every one that believes. The one is, "If righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," Gal. ii. 21; an awful word, which should put all upon their guard, as to the important doctrine of a sinner's justification before God; an error in which, is of such fatal tendency. The other is, "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace," Gal. v. 4, that is doctrinally. It is observable with what sharpness he, who at other times was gentle among the saints, "even as a nurse cherishes her children," 1 Thess. ii. 7, reproved the erring Galatians, whose error he calls, "a perverting the gospel of Christ," Gal. i. 7.

I shall next consider that of the *Pelagians*. The error of Pelagius was his exalting the free will of the creature above the free grace of God, in all the articles of salvation, and consequently in this of justification: he laid aside the doctrine of Christ's imputed, for that of our own inherent righteousness; that free will might have of its own, wherein to trust, whereof to glory, and wherewith to come before God. Thus unmindful was he, and so are all his followers, of what Christ has told us; "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me; for without me ye can do nothing," John xv. 4, 5. These pervert the order of grace, as much as the order of nature would be perverted, should any say, that the branch bears the root, and that without the root the branch might blossom and bring forth fruit. That great text, so expressive of the grace and order of the gospel, is a full confutation of Pelagianism; "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God has before ordained, that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. To be sure, Pelagius was one of the greatest patrons of free will, and as bitter an enemy to free grace, as the church ever was troubled with; his leaven has spread itself far and near, and is like to do more and more, under latter day darkness.

In the same path *Arius* before trod, with this dreadful addition, his affirming Christ to be no more than a creature, though he made him to be the first and chief of mere creatures: thus he robbed Christ, at once, of the divinity of his Person, and of his crown, as Mediator: according to whom the great end of all he either did or suffered, was partly to confirm his doctrine and mission, and partly to set his people an example; but he utterly denied his being, in a true and proper sense, the Lord our righteousness, or the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. And so did *Socinus*, with this further addition, that he made Christ to be a creature of a late date, who had no existence save in type and promise, before the ful-

ness of time. Thus wilfully did he shut his eyes against that great chapter, the first of John, which alone is a full confutation of his soul ruining error; where Christ is not represented as beginning with time, but as existing before all time: it is not, in the beginning did the Word begin to be; but "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God," eternal as being God; for so it follows, "and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made. He was in the world, and the world was made by him," John i. 1—3, 10. The Arminians also are for being justified by free will righteousness, and not from free grace: the glorious gift of righteousness, which has so much grace in it, and accompanying of it, is by them despised; and a rag of their own, a sorry web, which God has said shall never become a garment, is preferred. They shamefully wrest and darken all those texts, which shine in both Testaments, like stars of the first magnitude; and proclaim, as on the house top, that Christ is the Lord our righteousness, in the business of justification before God.

Such would do well to consider the history of free will, as it is recorded in the historical part of Scripture. The greatest trial of free will, was the trial God made of it, in Lucifer, the son of the morning, and in all the non-elect among the angels; who, under his conduct, kept not their first estate, but soon left their first habitation; and, of bright and shining angels, are become infernal devils. Next to this was the trial God made of free will, in our first parents; from whom nothing was withheld, which became a bountiful Creator to bestow on so noble a creature as man; but how soon did man, left to the conduct of his own free will, lose all, and become bankrupt? Now, if free will made no earnings of a covenant of works, got nothing by it in a state of innocence, but lost all; is it likely to recover all, on the foot of a covenant of works, in a state of sin and apostasy?

We may here consider, how man's will has been tried since the fall, and found to be no ways fit to be trusted. Was it not tried before the flood, when length of life, and strength of constitution, furnished mankind with the greatest opportunities, to improve all the talents free will, as it is called, was intrusted with? But, instead of retrieving what it had lost, or growing better, mankind grew worse and worse; "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually," Gen. vi. 6. Free will so rebelled, and was so provoking, as to bring down a deluge of water, in those early days, on mankind; as it will, in the end, bring a deluge of fire, even the general conflagration. It is very observable, and very humbling to consider, how free will, instead of acting the grateful,



dutiful, obedient part, when Israel was so remarkably delivered out of Egypt, and led by such a high arm of power, through the Red sea, murmured against God; called his power in question; talked of stoning Moses, and of returning back into Egypt; made a calf in Horeb, just before the burning mount, and to it ascribed all the praise of Israel's deliverance. How did free will behave in Christ's day, and in Christ's family? In Christ's day, in the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees, the priests and rulers; who, instead of receiving the Messiah with hearts enlarged in his praise, poured on him the utmost contempt; and though they wondered at the miracles wrought by him, yet they despised his person and character, and so they perished. And as free will acted a strange and most unaccountable part, in Christ's day, so it acted the basest part in Christ's family, in the person of Judas; who, though he ate of his bread, saw all the miracles which were wrought by Christ, and heard the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth, lifted up his heel against him, sold him for thirty pieces of silver, and betrayed him with a kiss. This put the traitor upon being his own executioner, prepared the halter he deserved, put it about his neck, and so dispatched him. In a word, all the sins that were ever acted on earth, are the birth of free will.

I shall next consider the *Papists*, who, the better to establish a justifying righteousness of their own, blend justification and sanctification together, and make a change of state to be one and the same thing with a change of nature: as if a traitor's becoming a loyal subject, and his being pardoned, were one and the same; whereas fact and experience prove them to be divers. They also destroy the oneness and completeness of Christ's satisfaction, making a dreadful mixture in the laver of the sanctuary of their worthless tears with Christ's most precious blood; to which they add their unscriptural penances, pilgrimages, vows, and abstinences, which they esteem and preach up to be at least atoning, if not meritorious. Thus they place, in the room of Christ's suretiship righteousness, a righteousness of their own, made up of superstition and will-worship; the worshipping of saints and angels; the respect they pay to the cross, and to all manner of relics, their vespers and paternosters; their works of supererogation; and the merits and intercession of their many saints, with the Virgin at the head of them. They tell us roundly, and without mincing the matter, that Christ has merited, that we may merit; so that Christ and his righteousness are but as the steps leading to the throne, on which carnal self is by them exalted; or as the scaffolds which they make use of in building Babel; by which, sorry as they are, they hope to mount the highest heaven. Thus doth Antichrist interfere with Christ in all his offices, that of a priest, as well as those of a king, and of a prophet.

I shall next consider the mistake of the *Neonomians*, who turn the gospel into a new and remedial law, and make faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, to be the sinner's justifying righteousness before God. That God's saved ones are brought to repent, and believe, and obey, is readily owned; but as it is for the sake of Christ, and of his righteousness, that it is given to any to repent, to believe, and to obey; so these things can no more be their justifying righteousness before God, than Christ can be divided against himself. So long as Christ is the Lord our righteousness, and is revealed in the gospel, as "the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believes," nothing that is ours can share with him therein: will he, who is to judge us, suffer himself to be thus supplanted by us? Shall we receive, at the hand of Christ, a heart to repent, and believe, and obey, and then make a Christ of it? The grace that gave Christ for us, and gives Christ to us, cannot be so mistaken, as to teach any to establish a justifying righteousness of their own.

I shall next consider the error of the *Quakers*, who ignorantly, to say no worse of them, make a Christ of the light of nature, and a gospel of the law of nature; whose justifying righteousness is made up of moral duties, such as are taught, not by the word of God, but by the light within. Thus they mistake the light of the moon for that of the sun, as if the moon could make the day, or ripen the harvest. The light and law of nature have their use, of which Cornelius is the top instance that we meet with in Scripture; and yet to Cornelius this message is sent: "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved," Acts xi. 13, 14. One would have thought that Cornelius, whose prayer was heard, and whose alms were had in remembrance in the sight of God, had been in a pardoned, justified, reconciled state; especially upon that saying of Peter's, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted of him." And yet the message the apostle Peter was sent to him about, was to tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved. From which we safely gather, that how commendable soever morality and natural religion are in themselves, and how much soever God may approve of them, as beyond all doubt he does, they cannot supply the place of Christ: if they could, Christ might have been spared, and a Plato, or a Seneca, have supplied the room of a Peter or an apostle Paul.

I shall, in the last place, mention the error of the *Antinomians*; where I shall show who and what the true Antinomians are: for all are not so, who are so nick-named by the enemy. The apostle Paul was so called in his day, and so was Christ; and thus are many of Christ's faithful ministers called in our

dark day, for preaching no other doctrine than that contained in my text. The Antinomians are either speculative or practical: speculative are such as endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that sin can do them no harm. That it shall not destroy nor damn the true believer, we readily own; but of the hurt it does them, they have less or more the experience, whenever they fall into sin; as David had, under the Old Testament, and the apostle Peter had, under the New. They likewise say, that God sees no sin in his people: none for which to condemn them, we readily grant; but that he sees sin in the best of them, to purge it out by his word, and by his rod, is what we affirm. They say further, that believers are not to pray for the forgiveness of their daily sins; not distinguishing between that which is virtual, in the purpose of God, and in the purchase of Christ, and that which is actual, according to the word. It is not to be forgiven in purpose, or in purchase, that the believer prays; but to have purposed and purchased forgiveness actually applied to him, according to the word. Their worst notion is, that believers are not under the law, as a rule of duty to Christ; but may live as they list, sin not being able to hurt them. I would hope that of these there are very few, if any, among Protestant Dissenters. Such would do well to remember, so as to copy after the apostle Paul, who *bewailed sin in its remains*, Rom. vii. 24, and desired to have it further mortified, Phil. iii. 20, and was under the law to Christ, 1 Cor. ix. 21. Practical Antinomians are those the apostle speaks of; "For many walk, of whom I have often told you, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Phil. iii. 18. These, it is to be feared, are many, and that their numbers are daily increasing: they gather not honey and sweetness, with the bee, but with the spider, poison from this flower of paradise, the doctrine of a sinner's justification before God.

#### APPLICATION.

All the application I shall make is, to put you upon the inquiry, how near this righteousness has been brought to you.

To the ear of all here present it has been brought, times without number; that is, in the sound of it, and into the head and memory, in the notion of it: but has it been brought into your hearts in the love and liking of it? Do you, from and with the heart, begin to like, and choose, and prefer this way of a sinner's justification before God? His being made the righteousness of God in Christ, and so freed in that righteousness from all condemnation on the one hand, and his being entitled to eternal glory on the other; of which it may be safely said, for

it may be abundantly proved from Scripture, that of all possible ways of a sinner's justification, this excels in glory; otherwise it could not be said, that therein God has "abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence," Eph. i. 18, which holds true as of the whole, so of every part of the salvation we have in and by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Has this righteousness been brought into your consciences, in the peace and comfort of it? Your spirits, it may be, are easy; but how came they so to be? If never disturbed and distressed for sin, it is a sad sign that their ease is from carnal security, and not from Christ. Or if the case be such as they at Rome are full of, who think, by their good works, both to atone and merit, it is so far from being Christ's peace, that it is Antichristian. But if it is founded on Christ's righteousness, received by faith, as your alone justifying righteousness; if your hearts have been with Christ, as the Lord your righteousness, the gospel in both Testaments declares, that you are at peace with God, as being justified by faith.

Do you evidence that you have thus been with Jesus, both by your worship and by your walk? Is the one spiritual, and the other circumspect? Go astray you may like lost sheep; but wallow in the mire of sin, like swine, you cannot. The same grace that has changed your state, has renewed your hearts; so that you are really "dead to sin, but alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." There is not a doctrine in the gospel but it may be abused: but a work of grace on the heart cannot; that is like a running spring, which breaks through all opposition, and works out all filth.

THE  
DOCTRINE OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE,  
ASSERTED AND VINDICATED :

IN TWO SERMONS.

By MR. SAMUEL WILSON.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON I.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 13.—It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

IN the beginning of this chapter, the apostle recommends to the saints, at Philippi, mutual forbearance, affection, humility, and condescension, as the great ornament of the Christian character. To this end, he reminds them of their common fellowship of the Spirit, and their joint relation to, and interest in, the blessed Jesus; who, as he observes, in the days of his flesh, exemplified these graces, in a very distinguishing manner: so entirely was his heart set upon advancing his Father's honour, and so prevailing the affection which he bore to his people, that, "Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Now, says the apostle, you profess to be the disciples of this Jesus, you call him Lord; keep in view then his temper and conduct, and copy after him: "Let the same mind be in you that was in him;" and so much the rather give diligence herein, as I, who when present with you, was serviceable, as an healer of your breaches, and an helper of your faith and joy, am now providentially removed from among you: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but how much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." God is calling you to duty, diligence, and circumspection; give no occasion for the reproach that your zeal declined upon my leaving you; but remember what is before you, a crown of immortal glory, and run with patience and constancy the race that is appointed you; and, in your way to the prize, let there be no other contention, but who shall soonest reach the goal, and first lay hold of eternal

life. And lest they should, conscious of their own spiritual impotence, be discouraged, he adds, "For it is God that worketh in you," &c. Your work, indeed, is great, your difficulties many; but if God is with you, he will give you a will, and furnish you with power to perform what is acceptable to him.

Perhaps it will be said, that the words under consideration, relate to saints already renewed in the spirit of their mind, and so cannot, with propriety, be produced as an argument for the necessity of a divine agency, in the conversion of a sinner. To this it might be answered, that it is no unusual thing, in theological inquiries, to borrow a passage of Scripture, as an illustration, where it is not insisted on as a direct proof; but the instance before us, admitting it primarily may belong to believers, the consequence will be this, that either the sinner has more will to, and power for, that which is good, than the saint, or the same God, who works in the one, must also in the other, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. If a good man, who knows so much of his duty, who has been so long accustomed to the discharge of it, and so often tasted the sweets of communion with God, whilst engaged in his service; if in the midst of all his advantages, experience, and hope, he cannot of himself will or perform any thing that is spiritually good; much less the sinner whose heart is carnal, who is a slave to his lusts, and under the tyranny of the god of this world.

The word which we translate *worketh*, is expressive of power, yea, of mighty power; it supposes a difficulty in the performance, and perfection of superior strength in the agent. It is not barely our setting our hand to a work, but the doing of it thoroughly, or to purpose. Accordingly, when the arm of the Lord is revealed, the sinner is born again, by the exceeding greatness of that power, whereby he subdues all things to himself. There is an energy on God's part, and a change on ours.

This working of the Almighty is further described to us as internal: He worketh *in us*, and that both to *will*, as well as to *do*. Ministers preach to us, but God worketh in us. The best of means, applied with the utmost skill, will not of themselves soften the hard, or cleanse the impure heart: God only has access to the spirits of men, so as to secure this desirable event, and he can do it on whom and when he pleases; For "he worketh in us, of his own good pleasure;" a phrase which has in it the ideas of sovereignty and of kindness. God gives his grace at pleasure, to whom, and in what degree, he thinks fit, dividing to every man as he will: and as this grace is his own image, and leads on to the glorious enjoyment of himself, it must needs be a favour of inestimable value.

The words being explained, give us an occasion to observe,

"That when a sinner is born again, there is a change wrought in his soul, by the mighty power of God."

By this change I do not understand an alteration of profession or character barely; for as the apostle tells us, circumcision avails no more than uncircumcision, where the new creature is wanting. The change we intend is real, not nominal; a change of the subject not of the name only. A man may professedly renounce idolatry, submit to baptism, as a badge of Christianity, and attend the worship of God, in the assemblies of the saints; call himself, and be deemed by others, a believer; and yet be a stranger to the change we are treating of. Again, we distinguish the grace of God in the renewing of a sinner, from reason, or the improvements of it, when its dictates are supposed to be duly attended to. Reason belongs to us as men, and is common to our nature, as raised above the beasts that perish: but this is not sufficient to make us wise unto salvation. Where is the person of whom it may be said, that, after a course of sin and impiety, he brought himself by bare reasoning, to forsake the evil of his way, to love the Lord his God with all his heart, to believe on the Lord Jesus, to worship God in the Spirit and to persevere in these things unto the end? Experience tells us, that sin and Satan so entirely possess the sinner's heart, that there must be something more than the care and improvement of our reason to make room for Christ and holiness. Nor further, do we mean by this change that which is merely the result of presenting certain truths to the understanding, in a strong and engaging light; so that whereas formerly they were either not at all, or very little, attended to by us, now we are brought, with proper application, to reflect and meditate on them, and so are by deductions from them, engaged in the choice of virtue, and the hatred of vice. This, indeed, we allow to follow upon this change, as a fruit of it; but till the soul is spiritually enlightened, we suppose it to be incapable of judging aright of spiritual truths, or of forming practical conclusions from them.

In contradistinction to these accounts of regeneration, we assert that it is the implanting of a principle of spiritual life, or the forming of the divine image in the soul, in which the soul itself, as to the substance of it, remains the same, but the qualities of it are altered; the understanding, from being darkened, becomes light in the Lord; the will, which before was rebellious against God, is now brought into subjection to him; and the affections, which before were wholly carnal, and determined on sensual objects are now purified and refined, and fixed on heavenly things. In a word the change is real and universal, the power which effects it is divine, the fruits many and discernible, and the great efficient Jehovah the Spirit.

A particular account of the exact way in which the Spirit accomplishes this great work is not to be expected, after our Lord has told us, that as "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh,

and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8, so that we are to attend only to the proof of the fact: that what the Scripture calls the new creature, or a principle of grace, is formed or wrought in the soul by the power of God, in a way of efficacious grace. I choose to call it the *new creature*, as distinguishing between regeneration and conversion, the one being previous to, though necessarily connected with the other. In regeneration, we are passive, and receive from God; in conversion, we are active, and turn to him; we repent, believe, and obey: but this supposes we have been his workmanship; and, by his power, have been renewed in the spirit of our mind.

Here I shall in some measure, pursue the very same method which a late celebrated writer, on the other-side of the question, admits to be just, and which he therefore keeps in view, in all his reasoning on the subject; and so begin,

1. With those arguments which may be taken from the *Scripture account* of the *work itself*, which is represented to us in such terms, as lead us necessarily to conclude, that the soul is *passive* in it, and that it is brought about by the arm of the Almighty. Thus,

1. The apostle tells us, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17. And again, "Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," Gal. vi. 15. And so we are said to be<sup>d</sup> God's *workmanship created*: and yet more expressly, the new man is said to be "created after God in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 24. I do not find it disputed whether these passages refer to the subject before us; and if they do, it must be allowed that either the metaphor is ill chosen, and wrongly applied, or it must be expressive of the same power in the new birth, with that which was exerted in creation, or the making of something out of nothing.

To this it is objected, that the term, *create*, does not always suppose the persons or things said to be created, to be wholly passive, or the power to be so great as we pretend; for God is said to create and form the church of the Jews, Isa. xliii. 1, which must be understood of their stipulating with God, as well as of his engagements to them; in which their covenanting with him they were active. To this we answer, It is certain, whether the phrase is to be understood in a natural or political sense, it stands connected with two other instances of God's goodness, (*viz.* redeeming them, and calling them by their name) in which they had no concern but what was purely passive: and, if we consider how often God upbraids that people with their breach of covenant, it will not so well agree with the design of the place, which is evidently their encouragement, that this circumstance should be introduced, which must necessarily affect



them with shame and fear. I cannot but think there was so much sovereignty in God's choosing Abraham, and so much power in his raising his family, from so small a beginning, to be so great a people, as might abundantly justify the prophet in the use of the terms *create* and *form*, without having any regard to their promissory or covenant engagements.

It is further objected, against this argument, that God is said to create that which he brings into a new and better state: thus David prays, *Create in me a clean heart*, Psal. li. 10, and God is said to *create new heavens*, and a *new earth*, and to *create Jerusalem a rejoicing*, Isa. lxxv. 17, 19.—As to the case of David, it is plain, his fall had so far convinced him of the plague of his own heart, that he despaired of healing it himself, and therefore cries to God, *Create in me a clean heart*. It might be a doubt with him, very probably, after so dreadful a backsliding, whether he had ever been truly converted; and if so much power, as would justify the expression, was necessary for his recovery, we may easily conclude what is needful for the renewing of a sinner, wholly dead in trespasses and sins.—As for the other passage mentioned, what difficulty soever may attend settling the exact meaning of it, the following expressions in the chapter, abundantly warrant the use of the metaphor; for, according to the prophet, "There is then to be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old; the wolf and the lamb are to feed together, and the lion to eat straw like a bullock;" events altogether supernatural and miraculous. As to the Greek fathers speaking of the new creature as a change for the better only, if it should be allowed that this is their sentiment, I do not see how it affects the argument; for the question is not, whether the change is for the better, but what power is necessary to it, and to whom it is to be referred, to God or the creature.

2. Another Scripture representation of regeneration, is that of our being *quickened* by the great God, when *dead in sins*, Eph. ii. 1—5. And what the power is, whereby we are quickened, the apostle tells us, chap. i. 18, 19, "That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." Whatever may be the fact the apostle had in view, the terms are as strong and expressive, as language will admit. Great pains are taken by our opponents, in expounding this place of the resurrection of the body, in the last day, which they allow to be a work of almighty power; but it is impossible to prove this to be the meaning of it, because there is not a word of the resurrection of the saints in the text. The natural meaning of the place is evidently this: the apostle prays that God would enlighten them into that mystery of mercy, the work of faith in

their souls, begun and carried on by the same power, which raised his Son from the dead; and whereas he speaks of those who did believe, it is to acquaint them, that faith, in the exercise and increase, is from the divine power, as well as in the first principle.

How far this power is consistent with Scripture exhortations and persuasions, will be considered in its place.

3. We are said, in Scripture, to be *born from above*, to be *born of God*, and *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*. In regeneration, the agency is removed from the creature, and ascribed to the great Creator.

To this it is objected, that we are said to be “begotten by the word of the living God, and that faith comes by hearing,” and the apostle tells the Corinthians, “he begot them by his gospel;” which must, say our opponents, be understood in a way of moral suasion, and not in that supernatural, all-powerful way we contend for. To this we reply, that though “faith comes by hearing, yet it is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God.” Ministers preach, and whilst they preach, and with their preaching, God works, and so it is that men are turned unto him; otherwise even a Paul may plant, and an Apollos water, but there will be no increase; for, as the apostle observes, they are only ministers, by whom we believe: “Neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” So that we conclude, the metaphors, which the Scripture makes use of, in representing the renewing of a sinner, carry in them plain marks of a divine interposure, and that in a way of infinite and almighty power. And to understand them otherwise, is to charge the Holy Spirit with what is allowed to be a blemish in all writers, the using of words without meaning, or of figures widely distant from, and disproportionate to the subject.

II. If we consider the Scripture account of the *sinner* before this change passes upon him, it will serve as a further proof of the necessity of efficacious grace, in our being born again.

1. We are said to be “dead in trespasses and sins,” Eph. ii. 1, Col. ii. 13; that is, by reason of sin, to be altogether impotent to that which is good. As the organs of the body at death cease to perform their usual functions, so the unrenewed sinner is *without God and without Christ in the world*; he is lost to his duty, and estranged from every thing that is spiritually good.

To this it is objected, that common convictions, especially where they are strong, prove that the sinner, even before conversion, is not void of all sense, as a dead body is; so that the argument, according to us, if it proves any thing, proves, say they, too much. To this we answer, that all convictions are originally from God, and the sinner, under the greatest fear of punishment, may have no apprehension of the excellency of his

duty, nor any spiritual desire after communion with God; witness Judas, who, though he had a hell in his conscience, was utterly a stranger to the grace of God.

It is further objected, that the places cited concern only the Gentile world, held under the government of Satan, but have no relation to the proselytes of justice, much less to the Jew, and least of all to the baptized Christian. To this it is sufficient to reply, that the apostle was quite of another mind, or he would not have said, "Among whom we all had our conversation in times past;" and, in another epistle, where he is professedly considering the difference between Jew and Gentile, he says: "What then, are we better than they? no, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jew and Gentile, that they are all under sin," Rom. iii. 9; and therefore he uses that phrase to the church of Corinth, after an enumeration of the greatest sinners, "Such were some of you," 1 Cor. vi. 20. And he puts himself into the number, in what he says to Titus: "For we ourselves also were some time foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts." Now, it will easily be granted, that the apostle, before his conversion, was restrained from grosser sins; none suppose that he ran into all excess of riot, but had escaped the pollutions which were in the world through lust; and if that is allowed, it will be difficult to assign a reason why he should thus put himself into the number of the chief of sinners, if there had not been something common to them all; I mean, an impotence to good, and a propensity to evil.

2. A further account, which the Scripture gives us, of our condition before conversion, is, that our *understanding is darkened*; that we are *alienated from the life of God*, through the ignorance that is in us, because of the *blindness of our hearts*, Eph. iv. 18; yea, we are said to be *darkness*, ver. 8. And the apostle tells us: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14; so that if we are made wise unto salvation, "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness," must, in the same way, and by the same power, "enlighten our understandings, to give us the knowledge of his glory, as it shines in the Person of his Son," 2 Cor. iv. 6. Till this is the case, the gospel, though in itself the *wisdom of God*, will be accounted *foolishness*, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

As to what is objected, that these passages only describe the case of the wilfully blind, who love darkness rather than light, we answer, they are evidently delivered in too general terms to admit of such an interpretation; yea, we are expressly told, "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understands; there is none that seeks after God," Rom. iii. 10, 11.

3. Another argument may be taken from our Lord's words:

"No man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him," John vi. 44. By *coming to Christ*, we understand receiving him, or believing in him: by the Father's *drawing*, his work of power upon the heart of a sinner, when he is brought to Christ. Now, without this, says our Lord, no man can come unto me; not the wise and prudent, the learned or ingenious, any more than the ignorant and illiterate, the obstinate and rebellious: the event is alike impossible to them all; "no man can come except the Father draw him."

To this it is objected, that, if this is the case, there is nothing praiseworthy in our faith, or blameworthy in our unbelief; since when God draws, there is no resisting; and where he is not pleased to do it, we cannot move, in a spiritual sense. To this we answer: it is as true, that before conversion, we will not, as that we cannot come to Christ: though we may not be condemned for a mere impossibility of believing, yet we may very justly, for strengthening ourselves in our prejudices against Christ, and the way of salvation by him. That the Scripture expressly tells us, faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; and yet we are required to believe. Nor do I see any such contradiction in some men's being judicially, as a punishment for their sins, *shut up in unbelief*, and their condemnation for *loving darkness, rather than light*.

Again, it is objected, that this drawing of the Father is to be understood only or principally of God's persuading, and prevailing upon us to come to Christ, by the consideration of the miracles, or mighty works, which were done by him, as an evidence of his being the Messiah, and by the promise of eternal life upon our coming. To this we answer, that supposing (though we can by no means allow it) this were the genuine sense of the place, we might urge it as an argument in the case before us; for if we cannot, but as taught of God, consider the nature and evidence of Christ's miracles, which are barely facts, supposed to be done by him, in confirmation of his mission, much less can we, without a divine interposure, renounce our darling corruptions, quit our most beloved iniquities, and heartily embrace Jesus, as our Saviour and our King. In short, the tree must first be made good, before it can produce any good fruit; for "the carnal mind," whilst it continues so, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7.

III. Our next general head of argument is taken from God's *challenging this work as his own*, speaking of it as performed by him, and in such terms, as manifestly exclude the creature's agency: thus we read, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul," Deut. xxx. 6. This is thus explained by the prophet Ezekiel: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you, and I will take

the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes," Ezek. xi. 19, 20. A like promise we have in these words: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes," Ezek. xxxvi. 26—28. And so the prophet Jeremiah, giving an account of the new covenant, does it in these terms: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people," Jer. xxxi. 33. And more fully in the following words: "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear for ever," Jer. xxxii. 39. Now, can it be thought that, by all these expressions, God intends no more than that he will assist and succeed our endeavours to renew and convert ourselves? Is this the meaning of his putting his Spirit within us? of his taking the stone out of the heart, and giving a heart of flesh? Why does he promise so often, I will do this for you, if the work were divided between him and us? So that, according to the language of the Old Testament, we are to expect renewing grace from God, as his own proper work.

To this it is objected, that the passages mentioned out of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, refer to the Jews in the end of the world, and therefore are wrongly produced in the question before us. To this we answer, that if that be the case, it proves, however, their conversion will be of God. Besides, these promises contain blessings, which are inseparable from salvation, and what every saint is in the experience of.

The apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, chap. viii. 8, &c., quotes them, and applies them to Christ, as the surety of this covenant, and so uses this as an argument of the superior excellency of the gospel, above the Jewish dispensation. That *the covenant is better, established upon better promises*, would have been foreign to this design, if it related only to the recovery of the Jews, in the end of the world.

In the New Testament we read, that God *opened the heart of Lydia*, Acts xvi. 14; that *faith is not of ourselves*, it is *his gift*, Eph. ii. 8. He gives it to some to believe; he must *draw*, or there will be no *coming* to Christ, John vi. 44. Paul preaches and prays, but God opened Lydia's heart. He must prepare the heart for the seed, and cause the seed to take root, and to bring forth fruit to his glory: and therefore the apostle distinguishes between the gospel, and the power that renders it successful; "Our gospel came to you, not in word only, but also in power,

1 Thess. i. 5. Life and immortality are, indeed, brought to light by the gospel; but God only can make it unto us a savour of life unto life; and this he does, when he makes it his power unto salvation. But to proceed,

IV. Another argument for the efficacy of the grace of God in regeneration, may be taken from this consideration: that supposing infants are *polluted* and *defiled*, in consequence of what we call *original sin*, as many of these as die before the actual exercise of reason, must either be renewed by the immediate hand of God, or be excluded from salvation, since our Lord has told us, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3; nor will it be disputed, that without habitual holiness, at least, no man can see the Lord. As for infants, we take it for granted, in the present argument, that they are *conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity*; that which is *born of the flesh, is flesh*; that they are, by reason of the disobedience of the first man, sinners, and so unworthy of and unmeet for the heavenly glory, and must be excluded from it, unless washed in the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. To suppose them all, or indeed any of them, to perish, is to be cruelly wise above what is written; and to imagine they are so holy, as to need no cleansing, or that any thing defiled can enter into heaven, is directly flying in the face of Scripture; so that though we are not told positively what is their portion, yet we may safely determine that they are made meet, if in heaven, for that inheritance, which is incorruptible and undefiled. And, if this is the case, we cannot suppose they contribute any thing to it themselves; it must be from the abundant mercy and powerful grace of a compassionate God. Now, can it be thought that persons grown to years of maturity, who have for a great while accustomed themselves to do evil, and whose vicious habits are hereby confirmed and enlarged, will be more easily wrought upon? It is true, they have some degrees of reason and conscience; but as these are in the service of sin, the bias will be ever to evil, till it is altered by the grace of God. If it should be said, *Secret things belong to God*; and, as he has not expressly told us what will be the final state of infants, no argument can be fairly drawn from premises, which are in themselves uncertain: we answer, no more is intended by it, than what will be easily granted by those who allow the doctrine of original sin: and where this is denied, we agree it is of no force.

We might now produce some eminent instances of the grace of God, in the renewing of sinners, as they stand recorded in Scripture; from which we may conclude, that in their case, however, the happy change was from God, and the immediate effect of his almighty power. Thus, in the story of Zaccheus, it does not appear that our Lord said any more to him than this, "Make haste and come down; to-day I must abide at thine

house," Luke xix. Yet presently a change was wrought in his soul, and the fruits of it appeared in an ingenuous confession of his former iniquities, and, in an humble resolution to pursue the contrary paths of justice and mercy. Now, what can this, so great and sudden an alteration, be attributed to, but the powerful influence which the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ had upon his mind? We cannot suppose there was an opportunity for a great deal of discourse or reasoning with him; but if there was, we may easily judge how far words alone are sufficient to engage a rigorous oppressor in acts of righteousness and mercy; so that, from the effects, we may judge of the cause, and conclude, that so great a change could not have been made at once upon such a heart, but by the same power whereby God is able to subdue all things to himself. Another instance, which might be mentioned, is that of Saul, who was not proselyted to Christianity under a sermon, or at a religious conference, Acts ix., but when his mind was under the strongest and most settled prejudice against it; when his zeal in persecuting the church was heightened into a kind of fury or madness: under these unpromising circumstances, he is made to hear the voice of the Son of God, and live: and, in the humble language of a disciple, to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" instead of going on, as he had designed, in making havoc of the church. We might add the case of the thief on the cross, who either went to heaven without holiness, or received it immediately from that Jesus, who said to him, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise," Luke xxii. 39, &c. If it is said, These are extraordinary cases; we answer, Whatever difference there may be in the circumstances of sinners, the power is the same in the renewing of them all; for the enmity, which is in every sinner's heart against Christ and holiness, can only be removed by an act of omnipotence.

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## SERMON II.

PHILIPPIANS, ii. 13.—It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

THE doctrine which we endeavoured to state and establish, in the preceding discourse, was to this effect: that when a sinner is born again, there is a mighty change wrought in his soul, by the efficacious working of the Holy Ghost. His being quickened, and made spiritually alive, is the effect of God's power, which works in him, as well to will as to do, of his own good pleasure. This we attempted to prove from the Scripture representations of the work itself, in which it is called a new creation, a resurrection, and a being born again; terms expressive of power; in the exertion of which the Almighty is, and cannot

but be alone, and the creature manifestly passive. Again, we observed, from the said infallible oracles, that the state of man before this change passes upon him, is such, as will by no means admit of the supposition of an ability to renew himself, since he is described as "dead in trespasses and sins, having his understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart;" inasmuch as he is said to be *darkness* itself; and it is affirmed of him, that he "receives not the things of the Spirit of God, but accounts them foolishness." On these accounts, our Lord might well say, "That no man can come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." Further, we observed, that God challenges this work as his own, and speaks of it in the Old and New Testament, as brought about by his power; and the promises which he has made concerning it, conclude him to be equal to the work, as well as gracious to his chosen; and are as entirely silent, as to the agency, as they exclude and set aside the merit, of the creature. Moreover, we hinted that this must be the case with infants dying before the exercise of reason, supposing them to be under the pollution of original sin, unless we exclude them all from salvation. If they are regenerated, it cannot be in the way of moral suasion, but of internal and almighty efficacy.

We now proceed to another consideration, to prove the necessity of efficacious grace, in the renewing of a sinner; and that may be taken,

V. From the *difficulty* of the work, as it consists in conquering the strongest prejudices, mortifying the most corrupt habits, and in the implanting of a principle of grace and holiness to which the sinner is entirely averse; and, in opposition to which, Satan, who maintains the throne in his heart, uses his utmost endeavours. There is a greater distance between the terms, *sin* and *holiness*, *corruption* and *grace*, than betwixt those of *something* and *nothing*. In creation, something is formed out of nothing; but in regeneration, (as one strongly expresses it,) hell is changed into heaven. In creation there is no assistance, but then there is no opposition; but regeneration is like the stemming of a rapid stream, and turning it into a contrary course; in which, as there is nothing to help, so there is every thing to hinder. The sinner is not barely destitute of the divine image, and without strength for the performance of what is good, but "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, is evil continually," Gen. vi. 5. He is so far from the fear of the Lord, and any concern about communion with him, that the language of his heart unto God is, "Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that I should serve him? and what profit should I have if I pray unto him?" Job. xxi. 14. And, whilst he is wilfully pursuing a course of rebellion, and



strengthening and enlarging his vicious habits, we may well ask, with the prophet, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Then, and not till then, may the sinner, "who has been accustomed to do evil, learn to do well," Jer. xiii. 23. Can any created finite power, at once, in a moment, change the fierceness of a devouring lion into the meekness of a lamb? If this calls for omnipotence, how much more to reduce the stout-hearted sinner, who is far from righteousness, to the obedience of faith, and a delight in the law of the Lord, after the inward man. Go and try the experiment, treat with the rebel, who, for a course of years, has had pleasure in unrighteousness, whose heart is in league with Satan, and strongly attached to sin; use the most moving and persuasive arguments to convince him of the folly of his way: see whether he will be brought by all your reasoning, to quit his darling lusts, and walk in the ways of the Lord; no, after all your advice, though mingled with tears, he loves his idols, and after them will he go. Satan has such an interest in the hearts of the children of disobedience; he leads them captive to that degree, that none but the Almighty can dispossess him, and break the chain: and therefore, when the apostle is speaking of this mercy, he uses a word strongly expressive of power; "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness," hath snatched us out of the power or hand of the devil, "and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son," Col. i. 12, 13.

An excellent and most judicious divine has a passage pertinent to our purpose, in his discourse on Regeneration: "The new birth," says he, "is a change of nature; of a nature, where there was as little of spiritual good, as there was of being in nothing before the creation. It is the change of a stone into flesh, of a heart, that, like a stone, has hardness and settledness of sinful parts, a strong resistance against any instrument, an incorporation of sin and lust with its very nature; where the heart and sin, self and sin, are cordially one and the same. None can change such a nature but the God of all grace. No man can change the nature of the meanest creature in the world: Now, to see a lump of vice become the model of virtue; him that drank in iniquity like water, to thirst after righteousness, to crucify his darling flesh, to be weary of the poison he loved, for the purity he hated, speaks a supernatural grace, transcendently attractive, and powerfully operative." So that as he somewhere else observes, "We have no reason to wonder that creation is only ascribed to the hand of God, when, in regeneration, his arm is supposed to be revealed." But to proceed,

VI. If we consider the different *success* of the gospel, as dispensed by several persons, or by the same person, at different

times, it will be evident that there must be the power of God attending it, or it will not be successful to salvation, or prove a savour of life unto life. Peter's hearers, and those to whom Stephen ministered, appear to be equally ignorant of and alike prejudiced against the gospel; the apostles deliver themselves with the same plainness and faithfulness, upon the subject of the guilt contracted, by shedding the innocent blood of the Son of God: three thousand are converted, baptized, and added to the church, from a single sermon, delivered by Peter; whereas Stephen's hearers blaspheme and stone him. Paul again finds hearts and houses open to him, in one city, and is obliged to escape for his life in another.

Now, how can this be accounted for, but upon the apostle's principle, "Neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God that gives the increase?" Nay, how common is it for the same person, who has, perhaps, for years, sat unmoved under the ministry of a learned, faithful and affectionate preacher, at length in the day of God's power, under means far less likely to answer the end, to be awakened, convinced, and renewed? And are there not many instances of persons, of the same family, education, and advantages, attending the same means, and one is taken, and he perhaps the most profane or obstinate, and the rest left to a bare outside profession, or an hypocritical formality? Why should the same gospel in one hand, thus run and be glorified; and, in another, no less valuable, be a savour of death unto death? Why should the same preacher, at one time, see of the travail of his soul to his satisfaction: at another time have occasion to complain, *Who has believed our report?* If the weapons of our warfare were mighty in themselves, why not equally, and at all times successful? But the event makes it evident, they are only so through God; and when his power is put forth, he can easily, and he only can, bring down every high thought and imagination, and reduce the stubborn hearts of rebellious sinners to a subjection to himself.

VII. Another argument for the efficiency of the grace of God in regeneration, may be taken from the consideration of the *concern* which God has in the whole world. If we reflect on the various parts of the creation, we shall find, that, in the vegetable, animal, rational, and intellectual world, all first or natural principles are derived from God; and the actual exercise of those principles, whatever concurrent circumstances may attend, is constantly under his providential influence. And is this the case in universal nature? And can we suppose that in regeneration, one of the noblest works of God, he is left out as having little or no concern? How strange, how unaccountable, would this be?

Our natural philosophers readily allow, that every thing that is necessary for the growth and improvement of vegetables, is from God; that he, as the great Author of nature, has given

it to the seed, to receive the fattening influence of the earth, the moisture of the rain, and the enlivening genial rays of the sun: nor will they dispute the sun itself had never been what it now is, the great fountain of light and heat to the universe, but by the will and power of the Creator. They will tell you the rain descends at his appointment, and that he orders and determines its extent and usefulness; that there is an equal display of his power, wisdom, and goodness, in the growth of the grass, in the flourishing of plants, and the increase of corn: all is from him, and under the immediate influence of his providence. Moreover, in the animal world, or among the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, or the fish in the sea, they will allow a principle of life and motion is from God, and the actual exercise of it in a dependence upon him. What we call sometimes instinct, or nature in them, is confessedly not of themselves, but from him, who hath appointed their situation in the order of creatures, and furnished them with all their powers, sensations, and appetites; whence they are directed to collect their proper food, and reject what would be hurtful and destructive to them. And none but an atheistic sceptic will deny, but that, in the rational world, we have our souls, with all their capacities of reasoning, reflection, judgment, and memory, from God; that he made us by his power, and continues us by his providence, wiser than the beasts of the field, and of more understanding than the fowls of the air: and who will not allow, that the angels, creatures of the highest order, have all their intellectual powers from God? Now, shall we admit that every creature has its being from, and lives, and moves, and acts in a dependence upon the glorious Creator; and suppose that the saint receives a principle of grace from himself, and continues a believer, by the strength of his own reasoning, and the vigour and constancy of his own resolution? Is it from God that I am a reasonable thinking creature? and from myself that I am a Christian, holy and spiritual? Am I not insufficient for the least action in common life, but as upheld by his power, and under the influence of his providence? And will it be said, I can renew myself, and cleave to the Lord, with full purpose of heart, by my own strength? What is this but to allow a dependence in the less, and to deny it in the greater? What Adam possessed in paradise, as to the perfection of his nature, the felicity he enjoyed, and his power to serve, worship, and adore the Creator, he had confessedly from Him who made him, after his own image. Now, if the first impress of the divine likeness on his soul, was the produce of God's wisdom and power, certainly the restoring that image, when lost or impaired, can be no less the work of the Almighty. If the care and skill of an artificer is requisite to the first making of a machine, or any curious piece of work, it must be equally necessary to the repair of it, when its principal springs are broken, and every thing out of order. But we go on,

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VIII. To consider the *gross absurdities* which manifestly attend the denying the efficacy of the grace of God in regeneration; as,

1. This would be to furnish Christians with an easy and ready answer to that question of the apostle; "Who made thee to differ from another? What hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. iv. 7. Such a one might boldly reply, upon the scheme of our opponents, My own reflection and judgment; my reason and choice made me to differ: the means were, indeed, the same, what I enjoyed in common with others; but the success was the effect of my own care, diligence, and attention, whilst they missed of it through their own heedlessness and carnality. It is objected to this, that the apostle is here speaking of gifts only, and of such as were miraculously and immediately infused, without human industry, and conferred on the primitive Christians, without any co-operation of their own faculties: so that as this kind of ministration of the Spirit has, for a while ceased in the church, an argument cannot fairly be drawn from it, in our inquiries about the more standing and ordinary dispensations of it. To this we answer, that, admitting the apostle is speaking of gifts, renewing grace is undoubtedly one of those gifts, and not the least valuable of them, which came down from *the Father of lights*; for when we are born again, it is not of "the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" and we are no more to ascribe to our own agency the difference between us and others in the gifts of grace, than the apostles or primitive Christians could in the miraculous endowments which were bestowed upon them. Moreover, is it not evident that the difference between a sinner and a saint is a great deal more, both in the nature and consequence of it, than between a person possessed of gifts, and one who is destitute of them? Gifts are useful to others, but grace prepares for heaven; gifts may obtain and enlarge a reputation among men, but grace only disposes for an intimacy with God here, and the enjoyment of him hereafter. Is it God who makes the difference in the one, and man in the other? The apostle determines how it was in his own case; "And last of all," says he, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, "he was seen of me, as one born out of due time; for I am the least of the apostles, and am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God; but by the grace of God I am what I am." 1 Cor. xv. 8—10. The alteration is marvellous, the change surprising, from an enemy to a friend, from a persecutor to a preacher: but I ascribe it not to myself, but to the grace of God; and this grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain: so far from it, that under its influence, "I laboured more abundantly than they all." And so fearful was he, lest

God should not have all the glory, that he adds, "Yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me."

2. Another absurdity which attends the denying of the grace of God in regeneration, is its *contradicting* and *opposing* the general design of God in salvation, which is, that no flesh should glory in his sight, but that he who glorieth, should glory in the Lord. That doctrine which gives the creature room to boast, that his own arm, either in the whole or in part, brought him salvation, cannot be of God. If our will is to give the turning point, and the balance is placed in our own hands; and, after all the provision which God hath made, and the pains he is supposed to be at, the creature is himself to determine the matter by his own choice or refusal; to be sure, the honour ought to go with the agency. And of this our opponents seem to be so sensible, that some of them allow, that it is of preventing grace that we will and choose what is good, and refuse what is evil; of assisting grace, that we are enabled to perform that will, and persist in that choice; and of mercy, when we have done all, that we are accepted; a way of expressing themselves, not a little contradictory to their scheme, and which, at other times, they are far from being fond of. It is objected, that glorying, or boasting, in some instances, is not unlawful: that the apostle was found in the practice himself, and declares, with a good deal of vehemency, that, "It were better he should die, than any man make void his glorying;" and that elsewhere he speaks of rejoicing or boasting in the testimony of a good conscience. To this we answer; it must be proved, before the objection will be of any force, that the apostle is speaking in those places of the grace of God in regeneration; whereas, in the one, he is speaking of the high opinion he had of the gospel, in opposition to the contempt it met with from an ungodly world; and in the other, of the fruits, not of the principle of grace; which fruits he ascribes to a divine influence, when he says, "Not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God," he and the rest of the saints had their conversation in the world: and where is the inconsistency of this with that general direction; "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord?" Jer. ix. 23, 24.

3. Another absurdity arising from the supposition of the creature's *agency*, in his own regeneration, is, that it would then be uncertain whether any would be renewed at all; very possible that none might, and, all circumstances considered, absolutely impossible that any should. Suppose the best external evidence were produced, and the most weighty arguments made use of,

if the issue depends upon the will of man; and that will be as liable to refuse as to choose, the event must needs be uncertain till the creature has determined; nor could it be certainly known, were this the case, whether any one would determine right: but, if the Scripture account of man, before conversion, may be depended upon, if he is dead in trespasses, darkness, and enmity against God; his will, being averse to good, and prone to evil, would necessarily determine in favour of sin, and in a rejection of holiness. One would have thought, that when the apostle Paul came to Athens, the seat of learning, the wise men of that place would have patiently heard what he had to offer, and duly weighed and considered the nature and importance of his doctrine, and that at least the major part of them would have embraced the gospel evidence, which attended it. But, instead of this, we find that he met with more success in Corinth, a city remarkably dissolute and wicked, than he did among the learned philosophers of Athens; and, upon his attempt to reclaim the Athenians from their gross superstition and idolatry, they mocked and derided him, as a base fellow, and rejected the doctrine of salvation as foolish and irrational. So true is it what our Lord said, that "these things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes; neither can flesh or blood reveal them to us, but our Father who is in heaven."

We shall now inquire whether the grace of God, in the renewing of a sinner, may be frustrated, or set aside, by the opposition of the creature. And here we are to remember it is God's work, and therefore must be perfect, since he can and will do all his pleasure. To say that he cannot, though he would, change the sinner's heart, by an immediate act of his own power, is to challenge his omnipotence: so that the question is not whether God can do this, or no; but whether it is worthy of him, and how far it is really the case. And this may be determined,

(1.) From the inviolable and inseparable connexion of the several parts of that golden chain mentioned by the apostle: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 29, 30; that is, as many as are ordained unto eternal life, either are, or shall be called and sanctified by the grace of God, as their meetness for it, and be justified by the righteousness of Christ, as their title to it, as well as, at length, be glorified in the enjoyment of it: accordingly we are expressly said "to be chosen unto holiness," Eph. i. 4. Now, if the purpose of God, in election, is supposed to stand, then those whom he thus loved, with an everlasting love, shall be effectually drawn by the cords of it, agreeably to what our Lord says: "All that

the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out."

(2.) This may be further argued, from the *purchase* which our Lord, by the merit of his obedience and death, has made of his people, with respect to their present safety and future felicity. The Scripture represents him not only as redeeming them from wrath, when he died for their offences, but as purchasing them to himself, as having a fulness of grace for their supply in this world, and as having obtained a glorious inheritance for them in the other. Accordingly, in the prospect of his approaching death, he prays, first, that "they might be sanctified through the truth, and be kept from the evil one;" and then adds, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me," John xvii. 17, 18. Grace and glory are, indeed, blessings altogether unmerited by the saint; but they are due to his surety, upon an engagement on the Father's part in the counsel of peace to the Son, that if he would *make his soul an offering for sin*, he should have a seed to serve him, and see of the travail of his soul to his satisfaction. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ having done his part to the abundant satisfaction of the Father, which was declared in his resurrection and session at his right hand; it would be unfaithful in the Father, and contrary to mutual stipulations, if any for whom he died should fall short of eternal life. And this must be the case, if any of these are supposed fully and finally to resist the grace of God. But,

(3.) We may consider God's chosen people, as *committed* to Christ, as his charge and trust, for which he is accountable to the Father; and accordingly he speaks of that part of them who were as yet uncalled, as his *other sheep*, whom he must bring in, and who should hear his voice, John x. 16. *Other sheep I have*, that is, I have their names in the book of life, their persons within the view of mine omniscience; these I must bring in; there is a necessity laid upon me; not on their part, but as I would approve myself to Him, who appointed me. It would be greatly inglorious to the Mediator, should he, when giving up his accounts to the Father, say, here are some only of the children whom thou hast given me; or, some of these, after all the pains I have been at, are yet unrenewed, and so unfit for eternal life. Besides,

(4.) If the soul is *passive* in the implanting the principle of grace, as we have endeavoured to prove, then there can be no resistance in regeneration. Whatever opposition may be made by the soul to common convictions before regeneration, or what conflict soever between flesh and spirit afterwards, yet we may, with the apostle, be confident, that where the work is begun, it shall be carried on; where the arm of the Lord is revealed, the

success will be answerable: so that we conclude, that God, in the renewing of a sinner, works so as none can hinder: otherwise he might be disappointed of his purpose, fail in his promise to his Son, or be overcome by the creature, in the exertion of the exceeding greatness of his power; either of which is unworthy of him, who is a God of truth, and whose arm is almighty.

Having thus established the doctrine proposed, we shall now attend to some of the principal *objections* which are advanced against it; such as,

1. It is said, by the opponents of efficacious grace, that God hath given sufficient grace to all men, upon the due improvement of which they may be saved, if it is not their own fault; and to assert the contrary, say they, is to wrong the fountain of goodness, and to represent him as a cruel, severe, and harsh Being, and so to make him the object of our dread and hatred, rather than of our love and reverence: and if all men have sufficient grace, what necessity for this mighty power of God, in the conversion of a sinner? And, to prove this, they quote these words: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it; wherefore, when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isa. v. 4. To this we answer in the three following particulars:

(1.) If it can be proved that God originally furnished man with sufficient knowledge of, and ability for the discharge of his duty, and that man, by his chosen rebellion, forfeited this, in common with all other mercies, and exposed himself to the deserved vengeance of God: then there can be no more unrighteousness in God to deny the creature, thus fallen, what they call sufficient grace, than to reserve fallen angels in chains, under darkness, to the coming of the great day. There would be some appearance of reason in the objection, if man was now to be considered as innocent, and in the uprightness in which God originally made him; but the Scripture concludes him under guilt; a very material circumstance, which the objection takes no manner of notice of.

(2.) If by *sufficient grace* is intended that which is absolutely so in itself, without the industry and care of the creature, or some superadded aids from heaven, we deny that there is such grace given to all men; for if there was, the effect must be the same in all, and so none could miscarry. If it is said, the success depends on the will of the creature, then this grace is so far insufficient in itself, and the phrase improper: if on a divine interposure, the objection comes to nothing; since it is then agreed, with us, that let the supposed grace be never so sufficient, the event is determined by a divine agency. Besides, is it not evident, from the Spirit's striving with the ungodly world, in Noah's time, for a hundred years together, without success, and from the conduct of the Jews, who, for so many ages, en-



joyed the ministry of the prophets, and at length of the Son of God himself, that *common convictions*, attended with the best of external advantages, are insufficient to effect the great work of regeneration? But,

(3.) As to the place quoted from the prophet Isaiah, in which God is represented, as asking, "What could he have done more that was not done?" we are not to suppose that he speaks as having exerted himself, *ad ultimum sui posse*, or as if he could not have given grace; for, to be sure, he who made the vine, could make it as fruitful as he pleased. The phrase is evidently *more humano*, in which the Almighty stoops to expostulate with the creature, for the abuse of his mercies, and upbraids him with his ingratitude; but is far from giving the least countenance to his pride, in a false opinion of his own sufficiency. We might add, as a further proof, that what the objection calls sufficient grace, is not given to all; that the very means of grace are denied to many. The gospel revelation is entirely unknown to a great part of the world now, as it was to the greatest part of it, under the Jewish dispensation; and the declaration is express, that "there is salvation in no other but our Lord Jesus Christ, nor any other name given under heaven, whereby we can be saved; that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;" so that we may ask, with the apostle, "How shall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard?" Such undoubtedly, have not the sufficient grace which our opponents contend for; and I need only add, with respect to others, who are favoured with the gospel, why do saints after conversion, beg so earnestly of God, that he would enlighten, assist, support, and sanctify them, if the means which they enjoyed were sufficient in themselves for this purpose, or might be rendered so, by their own care and industry? If we may judge of their sentiments by their petitions, they apprehended grace from God, as well as, and together with, the means, to be absolutely necessary to their spiritual improvement, and proficiency in holiness. But,

2. It is further objected, that if God has not given sufficient grace to all, why does he judge or condemn any for the want of it? To this we answer, with the apostle Paul, there will be two rules, by which the Judge will proceed in the great day; "As many as have sinned without the law, shall also perish without the law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law," Rom. ii. 12. I am far from believing that God will condemn the heathen, who never heard of Christ, for not believing in him, but conclude that they will be judged by that law which is written upon their hearts, which either excuses or accuses, according to the good or evil of their actions. And as for those who live under the sound of the gospel, and finally perish in unbelief, they will not, I humbly conceive, be

condemned so much for their spiritual impotence, as for their hardening their hearts, and positively shutting their ears against Christ: and, if this is the case, "is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance?" God forbid it. But,

3. It is objected, that God commands us to make ourselves *new hearts*; that he says, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" that we are exhorted to "cleanse our own hearts," and the like. Now, say they, if this is impracticable by the creature, how does this reflect upon the wisdom and goodness of the Lawgiver! Upon his wisdom in requiring that of us, which he knows is only in his own power to bestow: and upon his goodness in deriding and mocking his creatures with their misery? What should we think of a prince, who should command his subjects, on pain of his displeasure, to measure out the ocean, or number the sands on the sea shore? Or should he require of them any thing else equally impossible, how unworthy would this be of him, and how injurious to them! And shall we impute this to him, who is infinite goodness, and immense wisdom? God forbid. To this we answer,

(1.) That if a command on God's part necessarily infers a *full* power on our part to comply with it, or fulfil it, then we must be supposed to have the same power to serve him, as the saints in glory have: and, in this respect, the difference between a state of imperfection and absolute perfection, would be lost; for God requires we should "love him with all our hearts, and with all our souls;" and the law admits of no abatement, and rigorously requires perfection, and threatens eternal death to him who continues not in all things written therein to do them: so that if this were a fair way of reasoning, we must conclude, that because God commands we should be holy, as he is holy, walk as Christ walked, therefore we might, by our own power, cleanse ourselves from every degree of filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in his fear. But,

(2.) The most that can be judged of commands and exhortations, in Scripture, is this: they are representations of our *duty*, not of our *strength*; declarative of God's *authority*; and right of dominion, and not of our *power* or ability. A command respects us as creatures, whether upright or fallen; it is equally obligatory on us: God hath the same claim to worship from us, and the same dominion over us, since, as before the fall. To which we add,

(3.) The design of God, in these commands, is to acquaint us with the *necessity* and *importance* of these things which he requires; particularly in the instances referred to, "That without holiness we cannot see his face; that except a man have a new heart, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven:" and so they are intended, upon a conviction of our weakness and insufficiency, to lead us to him, who hath not only required

them of us, but hath promised to bestow them upon us; so that the awakened sinner, comparing the command and the promise together, in the one, is led to contemplate the majesty, authority, and holiness of God; in the other, his grace and faithfulness: the one is the rule of his duty; the other, the ground of his faith. From the one, he learns what he ought to be, and do, whilst he is led on, and encouraged by the other, to pray for that grace which is sufficient for him.

The same may be said with respect to the expostulations which we meet with in Scripture: they are designed to work upon the minds of those to whom they are addressed, and are made use of by the Spirit of God in convincing of sin; and is there any impropriety in charging it upon a rebellious ungrateful generation, that whereas "the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib," they, by a neglect of duty to their daily benefactor, discover more stupidity and disingenuity, than the very beasts who perish? May not the only wise God make use of the most moving and affecting language, in upbraiding his reasonable creatures with a contempt of his goodness, without supposing the sinner to be self-sufficient, and to stand in no need of his assistance?

4. It is further objected, that whereas we say the sinner is passive in regeneration, this is to destroy the freedom of the will, to subvert human liberty, and to reduce the reasonable creature to a mere machine, and so to take away the merit of virtue, by making it necessary, and not the result of choice. To this we answer; We are to distinguish between the nature of the will, and the qualities of it: the soul is the same, in all its faculties, after regeneration, as it was before; but the qualities of it are altered. The grace of God changes the corrupt, without invading the created nature of the will. Man's will, before the fall, was holy, as well as free, and so necessarily under a rational bias to every thing that was consonant to the divine Mind, and which was made known to him as such: but the will of man, as fallen, is impaired, not so much in its nature, or essence, as in its tendency; it is now most unhappily turned off, from spiritual to carnal and sensual objects; the will is the same in itself, or in its nature, now, as it was then; but the bias is very different: so that if we would judge aright of the freedom of man's will, we must consider the objects about which it is supposed to be conversant. If the worship, service, or love of God, are taken into the question, we assert, these were originally chosen objects of the delight of the innocent creature, but are now the matters of his aversion, whilst he continues in a state of unregeneracy; and, when he is renewed, and every high thought and imagination is reduced to a subjection to Christ, we never meet with a complaint from him of violence offered to his will, of being forced and compelled to the choice

of holiness. True, he is sensible of the hand of God upon his soul; he feels, acknowledges, and adores the arm of the Lord in his conversion; but he is so far from thinking it any hardship, that he rejoices abundantly in the mercy: and whereas, now his soul is thirsting after God, and his delight is in the law of the Lord, he is sensible this wonderful change, in this case, was effected by his power, who "works in his people both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure:" he is far from desiring such a liberty, as would leave him as liable to apostatize and miscarry, as to persevere and be saved: no; he rather longs to be in heaven, among the spirits of just men made perfect, under a glorious necessity (if that may be deemed so, which is the matter of their constant choice and delight) of serving God, without weariness or interruption: if he might express the utmost of his ambition, it is to be with Jesus, in a world where to sin or to offend is impossible.

We may observe, that at the same time we assert, that God works immediately in implanting the principle of grace, we allow, that the renewed sinner is a proper subject of moral suasion; and that God deals with him, in promoting a work of grace in his heart, in an argumentative way, and enables him to compare, and judge of things which are proposed to him, as proper to be pursued or avoided, and to choose, or refuse, as they appear desirable, or the contrary; though we conclude, in all this, the saint gladly esteems God's word as his only rule, and his Spirit, as his only guide. As to what is said concerning virtue, and the rewards which are supposed to be due to it, I apprehend, man, in his best estate, is vanity; his obedience, in its utmost spirituality and perfection, is a debt which he owes to his great Creator; nor can he be profitable unto God, so as to enter a claim, or challenge a reward from the Almighty; so that as we utterly disclaim the doctrine of merit on the creature's part, we need not inquire how far the grace of God, in the renewing of a sinner, destroys this idol, which the pride of man is so willing to set up and worship.

5. It is objected, if God works in us both to will and to do, and without his special grace we can do nothing, then we may even sit still, and do nothing, only wait carelessly till he shall excite us to, or assist us in our duty; and so this doctrine, say they, destroys all diligence and industry, and renders the sinner's endeavours, how sincere and serious soever, foolish and unnecessary. To this we answer, that the great God may certainly fix upon what order he pleases, in his conferring of favours, and bestowing undeserved blessings. Now, the order he has settled is this; that though he gives all freely, and not for our sakes, yet he will be sought to, and inquired of, by us for those spiritual mercies, which we want at his hand; the direction is, "Ask, seek, and knock;" the encouragement lies

in the promise, "Ye shall receive, ye shall find, and it shall be opened unto you. They who seek me early," says God, "shall find me;" and such as wait on him, "shall renew their strength;" so that it is in a way of duty that we are to expect his presence. God is not, indeed, tied up to means, he may be "found of them who seek him not;" but he has obliged us to a constant and diligent attendance upon them; and I would ask, is not his promise of meeting and blessing us, of his being in the midst of us, to assist and comfort us, a more rational and powerful motive to a close adherence to our duty, than a false imagination of a power, which we are not really possessed of, and so must necessarily disappoint us in all our ungrounded expectations from it?

Thus we have gone through the principal objections advanced against the doctrine of efficacious grace, and conclude, upon the whole, that we have Scripture and experience on our side, whilst we assert, that regeneration "is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." What remains, but a serious inquiry, whether we have tasted that the Lord is gracious; how far we have been quickened by the mighty power of God, who were dead in trespasses and sins? Without the new birth there is no entering into heaven, our Lord has expressly assured us. What can we then say of God's gracious dealings with us? Has he put his Spirit within us, written his law in our hearts, taken the stone out of our hearts, and given us hearts of flesh? Have we been made to loathe and abhor ourselves; to prize, above every thing, the person, righteousness, and fulness of Christ? Have we fled for refuge to him, as ready to perish? and do we find a spirit of grace and supplication poured out upon us? Do we thirst after communion with, and aim at a resemblance to Jesus? Is this, or such like, the genuine experience of our souls? then let us call upon them, and all that is within us, to bless his name, whose workmanship we are. Let him have all the glory; and let it be our great concern, as well as prayer to God continually, that we may, in all things, walk worthy of his holy vocation, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour, till we get safe to that world, where Father, Son, and Spirit, will be all in all, as the everlasting source of pure and perfect happiness; and where, as the great Jehovah, one God over all, they will, to endless ages, inhabit the praises of those who shall stand before the throne, perfectly cleansed from all filthiness, both of flesh and Spirit, and whose robes shall be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

THE  
DOCTRINE OF  
PERSEVERANCE IN GRACE,  
STATED AND DEFENDED;

IN TWO SERMONS.

By MR. THOMAS HALL,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON I.

PHILIPPIANS i. 6.—Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

WHATEVER be the immunities and privileges a people at present enjoy, it is a vast addition to have a good security for the lasting possession of them. Glorious things, indeed, are spoken of Zion, the city of God: the inhabitants thereof are, of all people upon earth, the most happy; their peculiar privileges are all spiritual, and, on that account, transcendently great and excellent. As they are elected of God, they are the objects of his distinguishing and everlasting love; being redeemed and clothed with the righteousness of Christ, they are blessed with the forgiveness of their sins; being called effectually by the Spirit of God, they are made partakers of a divine nature, and delivered from the bond of iniquity; by being adopted and renewed, they become the children of God, are fitted for communion with their heavenly Father, admitted into his gracious presence, and actually constituted the heirs of glory. But that, which adds to all, is an assurance, that they who have once had an access into this grace, shall perpetually stand therein.

Without an assurance of this, the holy pleasure excited in the mind by the glorious truths of the Gospel, insisted upon in the preceding sermons, would soon languish and die. It would certainly damp the joys of a believer, who knows the treachery of his own heart, and is convinced of the power and craft of his hellish foes, if, after all he hears of these invaluable grants, he must be told they may every one be revoked, and, through a possibility of falling from grace, the persons, who have been so highly favoured, may fall into disgrace, be abandoned, and suffered to perish at last.

That all fears of this kind may be prevented, He, who cannot lie, has declared, in his word, that "The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, who are sought out, shall be a city not forsaken," Isa. lxii. 12; that "the place of their defence shall be the munition of rocks; their bread shall be given them, and their waters shall be sure," Isa. xxxiii. 16; that "God will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence," Isa. iv. 5. From these, and many other declarations of heaven, the apostle might well be confident that He, who had begun a good work in the Philippians, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The important article of the *saints' establishment* and *perseverance in grace*, being allotted to my consideration in this Lecture, I have turned you to this verse; because it will soon appear, from a just explication of the words, that this doctrine is really founded upon divine authority.

To guide us into the meaning of the text, and to direct us in its application, it will be proper to take notice of these four things: 1. The work itself, which is here spoken of. 2. The perfection that was to crown it. 3. The apostle's confidence with respect to that perfection. 4. The common concern and interest of the saints in the whole matter.

(1.) I shall consider the *work* itself, which was begun in the Philippians.

This is termed a *good work*, by which we are to understand the work of grace, or the internal, supernatural, and effectual work of the Spirit of God upon their souls, whereby they were made partakers of his heavenly grace; in consequence whereof, they were renewed, sanctified, or made holy, and thus became new creatures.

That this work was begun in them, may easily be collected from several passages in this epistle; particularly from the seventh verse of this chapter, where the apostle says, they *were partakers of his grace*; i. e. of the like grace with himself: and this is agreeable to his declaration in the twenty-ninth verse, that unto them it was given, as well as to him, "both to believe on Christ, and to suffer for his sake." Further, when he prays, in the ninth verse, that "their love might abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment," it is supposed that they were already favoured with some knowledge and some judgment in spiritual things; and that their knowledge did not rest in mere speculation, but it warmed the heart, and kindled a holy flame within: yea, that as their knowledge was not a dead notion, so neither was their love a blind affection; but its motions and actings were under the guidance of an enlightened mind: and, upon the whole of what the apostle had observed,

while among them, and heard of them, when absent he concluded that they were the seals of his apostleship and ministry; and, as such, he calls them "his joy and crown," Phil. iv. 1. Hence it appears that the good work of grace was begun in them.

And since no other work whatever, in which they were especially concerned, either had, or was intended to have, the like abiding duration with the work of grace; and since nothing short of this could have given the like superlative occasion for that abundant thankfulness and joy, which, in the preceding verse, he declares he had, upon every remembrance of them, and their fellowship in the gospel, we must therefore conclude, that the work of true grace, and not the preaching of the gospel, was that good work which the text referred to: and thus I shall constantly understand it. Let us next consider,

(2.) The *perfection* with which this work was to be crowned.

This is expressed by its being *performed until the day of Jesus Christ*. By the *day of Christ*, is here meant the day of his second appearance, when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. This interpretation agrees with the phrase used by the apostle, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. v. 23, when he prays, that "they might be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The expression in the text running in such terms, must imply a complete protection through all the temptations and dangers, not of life only, but of death itself; and the saints may warrantably expect a final perseverance in grace, till they are brought safe to glory.

By the force of the word in the original, the perfection of the work is likewise signified. The Greek verb which we render *perform*, might well be translated *finish*; and when the last conflict with death is over, then shall the saints be immediately made perfect in holiness, and be preserved blameless till the day of Jesus Christ. Nor is it a determinate period, with an exclusion of succeeding duration, that is here intended; but the meaning is, that the good work shall be finished, and, being finished, it shall remain for ever perfect; for, in the day of judgment, the saints shall be openly acknowledged, and pronounced blessed: yea, by some solemn action, they shall then be publicly confirmed in a state of perfect purity and endless bliss. I shall therefore consider,

(3.) The apostle's *confidence*, with respect to this perfection.

In this expression, "Being confident of this very thing," we may take notice there are two pronouns, the emphasis whereof is well observed in our translation, the words being rendered, "this very thing." The phrase, as it stands here, points out three things.

1. The *certainty* of the saints' final perseverance in grace. This privilege is here spoken of as a matter, the accomplish-



ment whereof may be depended upon. The expression will not admit of the least doubt or suspicion; for it does not leave the case to rest upon a probability, though of the highest degree, but it carries it to the greatest certainty. It is as though he had said, if I can be confident of any thing, I can be confident of this, that where God has begun the good work, he will perform it until the day of Christ.

The grounds upon which his assurance was built, shall be considered hereafter; I shall go on to observe that this phrase points out,

2. The *importance* of this privilege. The distinctness, earnestness, and fervour, with which the apostle mentions it, are plain indications that it is a matter of importance. Our attention would not have been quickened by this remarkable introduction, had not what follows carried in it an answerable weight and moment.

And there is good reason for the utmost stress to be laid upon the saints' perseverance in grace; for, of all the privileges which belong to a believer's state, there is not a greater or one more valuable. It is so important and necessary, that without it all the blessings which could be included in the fellowship of the gospel, would quickly lose their glory; yea, and become as things of nought, in regard of the comfort and complete salvation of the soul. We may likewise take notice that the phrase points out,

3. The importance of the *belief* of this doctrine, as well as the moment of the doctrine itself. This we may infer, from its connexion with the third and fourth verses, where we read of the apostle's thankfulness to God upon every remembrance of the Philippians, and of his making request for them with joy. Now, his confidence, that "the good work would be performed to the day of Christ," stands as one reason, both of his thankfulness and of his joy.

Hence we may learn, that unless he had been confident of this very thing, he could not have presented his request and prayer for them with the joy that he here did; nor could there have been that life and cheerfulness in his praise that are here expressed: so that his confidence in this matter, or, in other terms, his firm belief of the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance, had a special influence, not only upon his comfort and joy, but likewise upon the praise and worship of God.

And the more direct, or the greater the influence which the belief of any doctrine has upon these things, the greater is the importance of such a belief, as must be allowed by all that have any due regard to either.

Having shown the justness of these remarks, I shall proceed to the last thing proposed for the opening the words; and that is, to consider,

(4.) The common *concern* and *interest* of the saints in the whole affair, or their common part or lot in the state supposed, and in the privilege asserted in the text. Under this head, we may observe two things:

1. That all the saints have the same *good work* begun in them, which was begun in the believers of the apostle's day. This will be evident, if we briefly take a comparative view of the spiritual and gracious attainments of those believers, with the near and just resemblance of the corresponding graces which are wrought in all the saints; *e. g.* were the believers of old renewed in the spirit of their mind, and blessed with the knowledge of the Redeemer? so are all the saints. Were the principles of the doctrine of Christ in them the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith towards God? so they are in all his people. Did the Lord open their hearts to believe unto righteousness? this is done for every child of God. Did their faith work by love? Did it purify the heart, raise their affections, and set them on things above? Did it give them victory over the world, and dispose them to follow Christ at all hazards? The same effects do universally attend the faith of all that are truly sanctified. And we may warrantably declare, that the root of the matter is in all them with whom these fruits are found; that they have the faith, which is the fruit of the Spirit, the faith which is of the operation of God. And, upon this foundation, we need not be afraid to assert, that they are partakers, with the Philippians, of the grace of God, as, upon the like foundation, the apostle acknowledges concerning them, that they were partakers of the same grace with him. Again, we may observe,

2. That the apostle had no *special ground* for his confidence in the case of the Philippians, beyond what he had with respect to all believers. If an attempt should be made to set aside this remark, one of these two things must be advanced, viz. either that the apostle's confidence was grounded on some particular revelation from God, promising the safety of the Philippians, in which other saints had no concern, like that which had a singular regard to the safety of Paul's mariners; or else it must be pretended, that his confidence arose from some testimony given of the truth of their graces, which testimony was peculiar to them, and not given of the graces of others. But neither of these suppositions will suit with the language which immediately follows in the next verse, where the apostle says, "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all." By this passage we are let into the apostle's method of reasoning in the case, and the force of his argument may be shown after this manner.

He first lays it down as a Scripture principle, or point of divine revelation, that where God has begun the good work, he will carry it on to the day of Christ. He then introduces

his good opinion of the Philippians, with the grounds and reasons of it, declaring he accounted them partakers of the grace of God, and esteemed them to be persons in whom the good work was begun; and, from hence, the conclusion was easy and natural, that as God had begun the good work in them, he would surely perform it to the day of Christ; for it shall certainly be thus carried on in all upon whom it is once begun.

Beza observes, that the word, in the original, should here be taken to signify not his *affection* to them, but his *judgment* concerning them, and the state they were in. And, in our translation, it is thus rendered. Now, since the tree is known by its fruit, he could not but judge, from the fruits they brought forth, some of which are here specified, that they really were what they professed to be: and, since he had no disorder or irregularity to charge upon any in that church, that was inconsistent with a state of grace, it was but proper and meet for him to think this, or to entertain this good opinion of them all, *i. e.* to esteem them all as gracious persons. And if, in truth, they were all partakers of the grace of God, he was then confident and sure they should all be preserved unto the coming of Christ; for this shall undoubtedly be the privilege of all that are truly sanctified.

Thus we see that the apostle's confidence, expressed in the text, was not built on any special revelation, or peculiar testimony, in which none, besides the Philippians, had any concern; but upon the new covenant, with its settlements and promises, as they are published in the everlasting gospel, the benefits whereof are common to the saints in all ages; and upon such evidences of the Philippians' interest in that covenant, as will universally prove an interest therein, with respect to all in whom the like characteristics are found.

As the text, therefore, was suited to encourage the Philippians, in an holy, humble, and joyful expectation of their being preserved until the day of Christ; so it is equally adapted to promote the like expectation and hope in all true believers, to the end of time.

To sum up the whole: our asserting, from this passage, the doctrine of the saints' perseverance in grace, is sufficiently justified by a careful attention to the apostle's method of reasoning; for hereby it is manifest that this was not a privilege peculiar to the Philippians, or that there was nothing particular in their case to be the ground of his confidence concerning their safety. But his arguing upon this principle, in the manner we have shown, proves that he took this to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, applicable to the case of all in whom the good work is begun: and, since he was under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God, in his reasoning, the use that is here made of this point, gives it a fresh confirmation; and the stress he lays

upon it, ought to be esteemed as an infallible testimony, that this doctrine is of divine original.

Thus I have given a large exposition of the text, to let you see, that in its most easy, natural, and necessary construction, it lies clear, as a sure foundation of the doctrinal observation, which I shall now raise from it, viz.

*That the good work of grace shall be invincibly carried on to perfection in all the saints.*

I am aware that my method in opening the words has taken up a pretty deal of your time, but some of it may now be redeemed; for I need not give any further description of the work of grace, nor add any thing more to show that this work is truly begun in all the saints, or that there is the same reason for us to conclude that the good work shall be carried on in all believers, as there was for the apostle's expectation, that it should be performed in the Philippians. What I have hinted already, in the explication of the text, is, I think, as much as my present business requires me to say upon these heads. And thus my work is contracted, and will lie chiefly in these three things:

I. I shall endeavour to state the point.

II. I shall produce some arguments for the proof of this doctrine.

III. I shall make some reply to the principal objections that are urged against it; and conclude with some directions and practical improvement.

I. I shall endeavour to *state the point* distinctly and fully.

This is necessary, for the better clearing of this doctrine. What I design here, shall be reduced to three general remarks: I shall not confine myself to a bare naming the heads, but enlarge upon each of them; and hereby I would hope things may be so distinguished and settled, as sufficiently to guard against several of the objections brought by those who oppose this doctrine. And if I should be enabled to do this with some degree of exactness and care; I apprehend it would very much facilitate my work in the remaining part of the design. For the clearer the distinction shall be made to appear, and the stronger the proof shall be of what is now to be laid down, with the more justice and freedom, I may venture to recur to these remarks, as occasion shall hereafter require; especially when I come to discharge the doctrine of the seeming difficulties with which some would endeavour unjustly to load it. I shall therefore observe,

1. That the establishment or perseverance which the Scriptures assert, respects the work of true grace, and that only.

2. It respects the state of believers, but not their frames; or it respects the principle of grace, but not its present exercise.

3. That all means necessary for the establishment of this

good work, are under the direction of God; and all obstacles which would threaten a disappointment, are subject to his control.

1. The establishment and perfection which is here asserted, respects the *work* of true grace, and that only.

There are works of another kind, and of a different nature which may decay and come to nothing; but the failure of these can never affect the truth of our doctrine: and the reason is plain, because, though these do generally, more or less, attend the work of grace, yet true grace does not always accompany them. I shall instance particularly in two things:

(1.) In the *gifts of the Spirit*. By the gifts of the Spirit, I here mean his common operations upon the minds and affections of persons who hear the gospel; which operations, how strong or powerful soever they be, do yet never bring the recipient, or subject thereof, into a truly gracious or holy state. That there is really a distinction to be made between the common gifts and saving graces of the Spirit; or that many of the gifts of the Spirit may be conferred separately from his graces, may be easily shown, from several places of Scripture; particularly from that Mat. vii. 21, where our Lord speaks of some who were endued with the gift of prophecy, with the faith of miracles, and the power of casting out devils, but were never blessed with that grace, which is the fruit of special love, which effectually turns the heart from iniquity, and whose exercise ever meets with our Saviour's approbation: they had gifts sufficient for the healing the bodily diseases of others, but wanted the grace that was necessary for the curing the spiritual maladies of their own souls.

This distinction may be further supported, from the apostle's argument, 1 Cor. xiii. 1—4, where he supposes that men might have the highest measures of the gifts of the Spirit, and yet be nothing in point of true grace: they might have such gifts, as to be capable of understanding all mysteries, and all knowledge: they might have such faith, as to be able to remove mountains, and a zeal that would incline them to make the most liberal distributions among the poor, and to die, at last, as martyrs in the cause of religion, and yet be destitute of that charity and love to Christ, and his people, which is one of the essential properties of true grace.

And as this distinction is supposed, in this argument, so it is confirmed by another passage, 2 Cor. xi. 13, where the apostle plainly shows, that there was, in fact, a distribution of gifts wholly separate from works of grace upon the hearts of those that received them: and this to such a degree, that men who were inwardly full of all wickedness, were yet in a capacity of imposing upon churches, upon the saints and people of God themselves: yea, by reason of the abundant furniture they had,

as to the gifts of the Spirit, they could pass for the apostles of Christ.

And if such an horrid deceit could be practised, in that pure and enlightened age, no marvel that in these times of degeneracy and darkness, many can transform themselves so far, as to have a name to live, though they are dead. But the apostle tells us, 2 Cor. xi. 15, that their end shall be according to their work. As their works are hypocritical and deceitful, so their end shall be destruction.

Whatever gifts are received without grace, will fail. Their nature is not abiding, neither has God engaged for their continuance: and as these gifts will fail, so the works, which were wrought in the exercise thereof, will fail likewise. And, generally speaking, by one trying dispensation or another, the Lord turns such professors as these upside down; and shows that while they said they were Jews, called themselves his people, and were accounted so by others, still all their profession was a lie; during its whole space, they held the truth in unrighteousness. They were always hypocrites, and no wonder that at last they proved apostates.

Such professors as these our times have brought forth in great abundance. Many, too many, have there been, who through the brightness of their gifts, and the splendour of their conversation, have appeared as stars of the first magnitude; but a little time has discovered them to be no more than falling meteors. However, such dreadful instances as these, frequently as they happen, should never be objected against the truth of our doctrine, which never engages for the continuance of the gifts, or of the common operations of the Spirit, but only maintains the final establishment of true grace. As another work that may fail, I shall instance,

(2.) In the *outward and visible state of particular churches*. By this, I mean that *outward fellowship* which professors have one with another, in all the ordinances of the gospel, with the external privileges and advantages belonging thereunto, appointed and ordained of God, for the mutual edification of his people. This may properly be termed a work of God, not only as it is stamped with his authority, but as every thing which relates to the state itself, together with its happy and flourishing condition, depends upon his providence and care. And this is a good work, ever erected with a gracious design.

But here observe, that when the great end for which a church state was founded, in any particular place, is answered in the conversion and salvation of those whose spiritual and eternal advantage was to be promoted thereby, it may then be suffered to fall into decay; yea, by degrees, as the number of the godly decreases, and in proportion as they who, through grace, were enabled to be faithful, are taken away, others, of

the like gracious spirit and temper, not rising up in their room, the glory of that state will certainly decline; and many, who were never effectually called, creeping in unawares, the church, at length, having lost its upright members, becomes destitute of its first love, and leaves its first works. Thus, instead of truth, springs up error in doctrine; and, in this sense, there will be a notorious falling from grace, that is, from the doctrines of grace; and, in consequence of this, all purity in worship is gradually destroyed, by increasing corruption, till, at length, loose and licentious practices wholly exterminate that holiness and strictness in conversation, which formerly prevailed.

Hereby God is provoked; and, when his testimonies, admonitions, and warnings have been neglected, slighted, and despised, he comes and removes their candlestick out of its place. Thus a work that was begun in mercy to some, is finally ruined in judgment to others.

But yet, if the case be rightly considered, no argument can justly be taken from hence, with which to oppose the doctrine of the saints' perseverance: for he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, will never suffer the shadow of death to stretch itself over the regions, where the people dwell, till provision is made for their safety. The righteous therefore shall either be taken away from the evil to come, and be lodged in the silent grave; or, by some unexpected turn in providence, they shall be brought nearer the line, where the gospel shines with greater strength and beauty; or if, after all, any true believer be still left behind, he shall be preserved by the special care of heaven, though he should be as a mourning dove, hid in the *clifts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs*: so that however the gifts of the Spirit, or the visible state of particular churches may cease, yet the work of true grace, with which alone our doctrine is concerned, shall never fail. The next remark is,

2. That the continuance, or establishment in grace, which the Scriptures assert, respects the *state* of believers, but not their *frames*; or it respects the principle of grace, but not its present exercise.

It is true, a perfection in grace is designed hereafter: the saints shall then be as the "wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;" their actings shall then be constantly pure and holy, free from all sinful mixture and alloy; no blemish shall spoil the glory, no defect shall mar the beauty of their heavenly worship. But, while they are in this world, they lie among the pots; and, as the word of God does not promise, so neither it does so much as allow the expectation of a total escape from all defilements here. Nay, their own hearts are a constant seat of war, for they have two contending powers within; "They have a law in their mem-

bers, warring against the law of their minds," and they are sometimes "brought into captivity to the law of sin, which is in their members." They are too often foiled in particular conflicts, and sin too frequently gains a temporary ascendant over grace. Hence arise the daily miscarriages which stain the character of the brightest saints. Hence spring the more gross enormities and open transgressions of some believers, by reason whereof their profession is slurred, their peace broken, their conscience wounded, the paths of religion are reproached, and a stumbling-block thrown in the way of others. Under the remembrance and sense of these things, some go mourning all their days.

Thus Christ, the Leader of his people, and the Captain of their salvation, does sometimes suffer the enemy to take an advantage, that He may have the opportunity of displaying his glory, in recovering it again at his own pleasure, to the greater confusion and overthrow of his and his people's adversaries. But still, in the midst of all the changes, to which the present condition of the saints is liable, there are two things belonging to their state, which shall never fail.

(1.) The saints' *relation* to God shall never cease.

The peculiar relation they stand in to God, is that of children to a Father; and such are the glories of this relation, that it is founded upon the new covenant, and the Mediator's perfect atonement. From thence results the security of their standing in his grace, as well as their first access into it; for though their iniquities, which are daily repeated, highly deserve that this relation should be dissolved, yet this judgment shall be continually prevented, through the atoning virtue of the Redeemer's blood. Thus much is intimated, when the apostle shows, that God's resolution to take his people into a new and peculiar relation to himself, is executed through the exercise of his pardoning mercy, Heb. viii. 10, 12, for this being settled as the constant method of his dispensing the grace of adoption, it teaches us that justification and adoption are both founded in the blood of Christ, and inseparably connected one with the other. And, since these blessings are inseparable, it follows, that the same promises which assure us that the justification of the saints shall be complete and perpetual, do likewise assure us, that their adoption shall be uninterrupted and eternal. And when God says, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. viii. 10, 12, it is constructively the same as if he had said, I will always be their God, and they shall always be my people; i. e. the relation shall continue, they shall be my sons and my daughters, and that for ever.

It must be allowed, indeed, that the children of God, by their frowardness and remissness in their walk, may provoke him to



deny them the light of his countenance. He may hide his face for a time, or he may frown and make them sensible of his fatherly displeasure, yet the relation shall never be extinct. God may chastise and correct his children; his compassion and love will engage him to do so; but he will never discard, or cast them out of his family. The passage we meet with in our Saviour's conference with the Jews, if taken as a standing maxim, is a sufficient proof of this. *The Son abideth ever.* The antithesis in the verse directs us in the explication, and shows that the words are applicable to the case before us, as well as to the purpose for which our Lord produced them, John viii. 35. "The servant abideth not in the house for ever;" no: upon any great offence, or for repeated misdemeanours, he is dismissed, turned out of doors, and the relation dissolved; but there is one sort of treatment for servants, and another for children. Wise and tender parents will wait long, and try all methods, to gain upon their children, and win them over unto that subjection and obedience which is their duty: and will not the Lord, who is infinite in his grace and love, exercise the greatest forbearance with his children? Since it is in his power, may it not be expected that he will melt them down, turn them from their evil ways, and effectually draw them with his love? Does not his promise to *heal their backslidings* suppose that he will take away their iniquity, through the blood of the covenant, and receive them graciously? Hos. xiv. 2, 4. Does not his promise of "putting his laws into their mind, and of writing them in their hearts," Heb. viii. 10, engage that he will make them to know wisdom in the hidden part, and teach them to walk humbly with their God? And is not their adoption constantly accompanied with regeneration, that, by virtue of their new nature, they may be fitted for holy walking? Besides, the design of their adoption is, that it should be "to the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 5, 6, which it cannot be, unless it be perpetual. It can never be pretended therefore, without a flat contradiction to Scripture, that any who have been once adopted into the number of the children of God, may afterward fall, so as to become the children of the devil.

(2.) The *vital principle* of grace in the saints shall never fail.

This principle which is infused at the instant of their regeneration, shall continue and abide in them for ever. The spiritual life is, in some respects, like the natural, both are liable to many indispositions, sicknesses and faintings: and, as in a swooning fit, for a time, all natural sense and motion may be gone, and yet the life remain, so the operations of grace may be interrupted, and, through the violence of temptation, the strength of corruption, or some spiritual decay, the actings of grace may be suspended, yet the principle of spiritual life does still continue.

Under all witherings of true believers, *the seed of God remains in them*; and his anointing does still abide, otherwise the promise would fail, Prov. xii. 3, in which it is engaged that the root of the righteous shall not be moved. Their bloom may be sometimes blighted, or their fruit blown off, and their branches may be tossed with tempests, but their root shall not be moved; no, not through any means, not upon any occasion, nor by any adversary whatever; and this because it is the Lord who says, "I will keep it, I will water it every moment," Isa. xxvii. 3. And, from the authority of such declarations of the word, we may venture positively to assert, that none who have had the principle did ever lose it. Peter's faith, though it failed as to its exercise, did yet continue as to its principle, which immediately revived, through the assistance that came with his Saviour's look. It would be wholly inconsistent with the success and prevalency of the Redeemer's intercession, to imagine that the apostle's grace was totally lost, after his Lord had prayed that his faith should not fail; and Christ's intercession, which is still carried on in heaven, is a firm security for the preservation of the spiritual life of all believers. For wise and holy ends, indeed, he may suffer them to fall, to the breaking of their bones, that they may learn to be humble and watchful; but the vital principle of grace shall never be extinguished; for their life, in the fountain and original of it, "is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3, where it is kept safe, out of the reach of the venomous darts of all its deadly enemies. This leads us to the last remark, which is,

3. That all *means necessary* for the accomplishing this good work, are under the direction of God, and all possible intervening events, which would threaten a disappointment, are subject to his control. The means necessary for the perfecting this work are either external or internal.

(1.) *External.* Among these are included the ordinances of the gospel; such as the word, sacraments, and prayer, which, with all the circumstances that relate both to their administration, and the saints' attendance upon them, are under the divine direction. And as the Shepherd of Israel knows where "he feedeth, where he maketh his flock to rest at noon," so he will take care that none of his "shall turn aside by the flocks of his companions." Again, he knows what stated and frequent attendances on the means of grace are necessary for his people's growth; and he can save them from all confinement, that would bar their approach to his sanctuary, and deliver them from those allurements and snares that would detain them from duty, or divert them from the paths of holiness: and he will watch that nothing of this kind shall prejudice their establishment, or hinder their final perseverance in grace. Further, he knows how long a standing in the school of Christ, on earth, is

necessary to fit and prepare for his immediate and glorious presence in heaven; and he will give his children a due time, that they may have a proportional space to go through that course of instruction and new obedience, that variety of temptation and experience, which is proper for their greater proficiency and edification now, and their complete perfection in knowledge and grace at last.

But, besides these, there are means of another nature, absolutely necessary for the carrying on the work; and these are,

(2.) *Internal and spiritual*; such as the repeated actings of faith and repentance, of hope and love, fresh hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a renewed delighting in God, with a resolved adherence to him, and a fixed dependence upon him. These likewise, with the various inducements, incitements, and helps needful thereunto, are all under the care of Him, who has begun the good work, and is determined to bring it to perfection. Accordingly he blesses his people with further anointings of the Holy One; "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength," Isa. xl. 29. A bountiful "God will supply all their need," Phil. iv. 19, and give them all things pertaining to a life of godliness, and withhold no good thing, whether it be food, correction, or healing, from those, who, being once brought into a state of grace, are thus enabled to walk uprightly, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. When their souls cleave to dust, he will quicken them; and, after all their languishing in grace, he will "make them revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, till their scent shall be as the wine of Lebanon," Hos. xiv. 7.

And as all means are under his direction, so all obstacles are subject to his control.

Nothing of this kind can possibly occur, but it must arise either from the devil, world, or flesh. These are, indeed, potent and subtle enemies; yet, however they may combine and unite their force, they shall never be able to compass the ruin of the saints, or hinder their complete salvation. As to the *devil*, he is an enemy in *chains*, Jude ver. 6, his power is limited; and "the God of peace shall bruise him under their feet," Rom. xvi. 20. As to the *world*, when Christ gave himself for the sins of his people, it was with a design that they might be "delivered from this present evil world," Gal. i. 4; and, though they are not taken out of the world immediately after their conversion, yet our Lord has prayed, that they may be "kept from the evil," John xvii. 15. As to their *corruptions*, the most dangerous of all their enemies, these shall be subdued, and no sin suffered to have "the dominion over them," Rom. vi. 14. But they shall, at last, be called "the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord, sought out, a city not forsaken," Isa. lxii. 12. He that is their sun to direct, will be their shield to defend them,

Psal. lxxxiv. 12. He will "keep them night and day, lest any hurt them," Isa. xxvii. 3. "No weapon formed against them shall ever prosper," Isa. liv. 17, for God will fulfil in them "all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in them, and they in him," 2 Thess. i. 11, 12, and this notwithstanding their unworthiness, and hell-deservings, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; for though he may *take vengeance of their inventions*, yet a covenant God *will forgive their sins*, Psal. xcix. 8.

Now, from this state of the case, we may learn what is contained in this doctrine, and what is not. Let us take a summary view of the foregoing remarks, and we may clearly see these two things:

1. This doctrine does not assert that men, who were never truly sanctified, may not lose the gifts, the convictions, and illuminations wrought in them by the common operations of the Spirit of God. It never asserts, that the seeming goodness of men void of grace, may not be like the morning cloud, or the early dew, which soon passeth away; or that the shows of religion, by which the splendid profession of hypocrites is supported for a time, may not fail, after all, and come to nothing: nor does it assert, that persons, who have only a speculative and notional knowledge of the truths of the gospel, may not change their opinion, and fall from the doctrines of grace; nor that visible churches, as such considered, may not lose their first love, and depart from their first works; nor that the children of God themselves may not possibly fall into some open acts of sin, and be guilty of such partial backsliding, as call for the deepest humiliation, and the most bitter lamentation. But then,

2. This doctrine does maintain, that such as really have a good work begun in them, shall never fall from their spiritual and peculiar relation to God; they shall never lose the vital principle of grace, nor sink again into a state of corruption and condemnation: but these shall be carried on in the paths of holiness; they shall either be wholly preserved from remarkable and scandalous falls, or be recovered, and set upon their feet again. They shall be restored, healed, revived, and finally kept, through faith, unto salvation; and this shall be accomplished by the mighty power of that God, who has all succour, relief, and assistance, at his command, and all possible circumstances under his control.

This is the light in which, I apprehend, this doctrine is set in the word of God, wherein it is fully revealed and confirmed by passages almost innumerable. I shall now proceed to the next general head of discourse; under which,

II. I shall produce some *arguments* for the proof of this doctrine.

I have hinted already that the apostle's method of reasoning shows this to be the doctrine of the Scriptures. I shall here add, as a **GENERAL PROOF**, that in them it is taught with such clearness and plainness, that he may run that reads. And it is worth our observing how much the Scriptures abound with it, how frequently it is introduced, upon how many, and what different occasions it is used, and with what a variety of expression it is there set forth. Sometimes it is asserted in a way of positive affirmation, and in a style divested of all metaphor: as where Christ says, "He that believeth shall be saved," Mark xvi. 16, and "whosoever believeth in me shall never die," John xi. 26. Sometimes it is expressed in a figurative symbolical manner: thus, "the path of the just shall be as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. "The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger," Job xvii. 9. Sometimes it is signified by the guard that is set over the righteous: thus we read, that "upon all the glory shall be a defence," Isa. iv. 5, and "there shall no evil happen to the just," Prov. xii. 21. Surely, then, they shall not be left to a final apostasy, the worst and sorest evil that could befall them. At other times, this doctrine is referred to, as the ground of the holy and humble confidence of the saints, and plainly supposed as the foundation of their comfortable hope, their raised expectation, and earnest prayers. Hence arose such conclusions and consequent petitions as these: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forsake not the works of thine own hand," Psal. cxxxviii. 8. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory," Psal. lxxiii. 24.

Here I might quote many passages out of the New Testament, in which prayers are offered up for the establishment of the saints; and these prayers of the inspired writers, which are recorded and delivered down as matter of instruction to others, were indited and directed by that infinitely blessed and glorious Spirit, who "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God:" they must certainly therefore be framed and formed in an entire correspondence to the purpose and decrees of God, and in an exact consonancy with what he has promised in the covenant of grace.

These petitions, then, are so far from being an objection against this doctrine, as some would imagine, that they are really a strong argument for it; for since the apostles, while under the immediate guidance of the Spirit, could pray for nothing but what was agreeable to the purpose of God; and yet they did, even at that time, as appears from their epistles, pray for the establishment of the saints; it follows, that their establishment is a thing agreeable to the divine counsel. And since these

petitions stand clear of those expressions of submission which attended their prayers, when events were to them uncertain, the holy fervour and confidence with which they are presented, afford a good proof that the apostles knew what they prayed for herein to be really agreeable to the purpose of God, and consequently that God had declared and promised this blessing in the covenant of grace.

As to the pretence, that such an assurance of the saints' establishment would have rendered their prayers needless, or that it would have been impertinent in them to have prayed for that which God had promised and assured them he would give; this can no more affect the prayers of the apostles, than it would affect the prayer of David, who was a more proper judge of the fitness of a request to be offered to God, than any among us can pretend to be; and yet we find he pleaded for the very thing which God had assured him should come to pass: "Now, O Lord God, the word which thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said," 2 Sam. vii. 25.

In his example, then, we have an instance to prove that the saints' assurance of God's intention to confer a blessing upon them, did not make them think their prayers were needless, and would be impertinent; and that this assurance, instead of making them remiss and negligent in their duty, as some have suggested, will be one of the most powerful means of giving vigour and life to their supplications. This is also evident from that expression of David, where he says, "For thou, O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee," 2 Sam. vii. 27, and so he goes on in the following verses, still pointing to the promise upon which his hope was raised, as the special reason and motive, by which his importunity in prayer was quickened.

And since the way of the Lord with his servants is one, in teaching them to regulate their prayers by his declarations of mercy, why may we not conclude, that the inspired prayers of the apostles were founded on a divine revelation and promise, as well as these prayers of David? We may be sure at least that no impropriety in presenting requests upon such a foundation, can ever be any just objection against it.

And should this be admitted, yet it will not follow, as some would suggest, that then, from the saints' prayers for daily protection and preservation from sin, it might be inferred, that God had promised them an absolute security from all transgression.

This is not a parallel case; for there is a vast difference between the inspired prayers of the apostles, and the weak supplications of those who have received the gifts and graces of

the Spirit, in a much lower degree, and who, at best, share in his assistance, in a very imperfect measure, even such as leaves them subject to many failures in their prayers, as well as in any other part of their conduct.

We may also observe, that the daily petitions of the saints for protection from sin, are grounded upon general promises and declarations in the word, that "sin shall not have dominion over them," Rom. vi. 14, that "the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation," 2 Pet. ii. 9, and that "God, who is faithful, will not suffer them to be tempted above that they are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13. And all these prayers of the saints, put up in faith and hope, shall be answered, either in kind, or in value; either they shall have, in particular instances, the protection they ask, and be preserved from committing the transgression, against which they pray, or the sin shall be pardoned through the Redeemer's blood, and they recovered from it with greater advantage, their strength being renewed, and their experience of his grace enlarged.

But if a final perseverance should not be granted, then all their prayers would be lost; and not theirs only, but the prayers of the inspired writers on their behalf; for, should they miss of this favour, no after blessing could be found to countervail the loss, which, by a final apostasy, they must sustain. But this shall never be the case of any of the saints; for the way of the Lord, which has been kindness and mercy in promising salvation, shall likewise be faithfulness and truth, Psal. xxv. 10, in the performance of it.

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## SERMON II.

PHILIPPIANS i. 6.—Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jésus Christ.

AFTER I had explained the words of the text, in the former discourse, I raised this doctrinal observation,

*That the good work of grace shall be invincibly carried on to perfection in all the saints.*

I then stated the point, and gave a general proof of it, by observing how frequently this doctrine is mentioned in Scripture. I shall proceed now to consider some particular arguments to support it. The chief I shall insist upon shall be drawn from the following heads. 1. The immutability of the purpose and promise of God. 2. The Redeemer's care over his people, with his peculiar relation unto, and union with them.

3. The constant residence and inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in the souls of believers.

1st. I shall consider the *immutability* of the purpose and promise of God, as one argument for the proof of this doctrine.

The harmonious agreement which there is between these two, makes it needless here to speak to them apart; for as the promise is a declaration of the counsel of God, so a declaration of his counsel in this matter is equivalent to a promise. And if, for brevity sake, I should, under this head, wave the distinction, and consider them together; or if I should promiscuously call one by the name of the other, it will not, I think, in the least affect the argument.

That I may still contract the more, I shall presume upon some things which lie as the foundation of our reasoning; but shall be careful herein not to exceed what, I apprehend, would be allowed by those of the contrary scheme. The things then which I take for granted are these; namely, that the declarations of grace, made in the word of God, are to be the only rule of our faith, and the just and adequate foundation of our hope in all matters that respect the welfare of the saints in time, and to eternity. Further,

I presume it will be allowed, that there are many promises in the word of God which relate to the saints' perseverance in grace, and that these promises shall be made good, according to the meaning and design of Him that gave them. As to the present argument, therefore, the proof of our doctrine depends upon a right interpretation, and due application of the promises; and this shows it to be my proper business, under this head, to make out these two propositions: 1. That final perseverance is promised in the word of God. 2. That the promises wherein this is contained, are applicable to all believers.

1. Final perseverance is *promised* in the word of God. If we look into the promises, we shall quickly find, that among other articles of spiritual blessings, this privilege of the saints' perseverance is one really comprehended and ascertained. For an instance hereof, I shall name the text where the apostle declares, that "The Lord hath said, I shall never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. That we may interpret these words in a consistence with their context, and with other parts of divine revelation, as well as with the special design for which they are quoted and used by the apostle, it will be proper to observe, in some instances, what is not included in them, and then declare more directly what their meaning must be.

We may be confident, these words could never mean, that, through the presence of God with his people, they should have an exemption from all straits and difficulties in the world, or from inward temptations, any more than outward; nor that they should be absolutely preserved from sinning, any more than



from being tempted to sin. Such a construction is peremptorily forbidden, by several expressions in the context, which shows, that, among those who had an interest in the promise, some "were in bonds, and did suffer adversity," while others who enjoyed an outward prosperity, were tempted to "covetousness in their conversation;" and it would be a weakness to imagine, that in the midst of these many temptations, they did wholly escape all inward defilement. The words therefore could never be intended to engage for a present exemption from such evils as these.

Their meaning then must be, that the saints should never be wholly deserted, nor utterly abandoned by the Lord. His promise "never to forsake them," must be supposed to signify, that he would be ever with them as their covenanted God and Father, through his Son; that he would ever appear in his own way, on their behalf, and exert himself in his all-sufficiency, according to his infinite wisdom, power, and love, to support and comfort them in their afflictions, to relieve them under their temptations, or to revive and restore them after they had fallen. It means, that though they might not always have him in their sight, yet he would be ever with them, by his gracious and his holy presence, to prevent their total apostasy, and to secure their final perseverance in grace, till they are brought safe to glory.

And this explication is entirely agreeable to many other passages in Scripture; particularly to those words of the apostle, where he expressly asserts, "that the Lord shall establish his people, and keep them from evil," 2 Thess. iii. 3. And again, to what he says in another place, where, after he prays for the Thessalonians, that "their whole spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ," he presently adds, "faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it," 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. And this infallible declaration being immediately subjoined, the apostle's petition is thereby advanced beyond all contradiction, into the full significancy of an heavenly promise.

Thus you see a final perseverance in grace is fully comprehended and ascertained in the promise and purpose of God; and it is needless here to produce any further proof of this kind; only, before I quit this head, I am obliged to observe, as to the passages last quoted from the epistles to the Thessalonians, that though they come up fully to our present purpose, yet they will not bear such a construction as would make them prove too much. This, indeed, has been the pretence of some, who tell us, that either they must promise an absolute freedom from all evil in this present state, or they cannot be taken absolutely to promise an escape from any evil at all. Thus some, by stretching the meaning of these texts too far, have attempted

to weaken their force, that they might not stand in such a fit condition for the defence of our doctrine, as their just explication would fairly leave them. But the guard with which the words are surrounded in their respective contexts, is abundantly sufficient to overrule the extravagance of such a wild construction; and our argument remains after all, in its full strength, to answer the purpose for which it is produced: for, in one of the places, the apostle desires the prayers of the Thessalonians for his own deliverance from outward troubles; and in the other he presents his prayers for them, that they may be wholly sanctified. These passages are a good clue to lead us into the true meaning of these promises, and do unanswerably determine their sense to be this, viz. That though the Lord may suffer his children to be in trouble, as the apostle himself then was; or though he may leave them to fall into sin, as will be frequently the case, while they are sanctified but in part, yet he will infallibly keep them safe from all such evils, as would prevent their progress to a final perfection in holiness, or bar their appearing at last without blame before him in love. I come now to the second proposition advanced, which is that,

2. These promises are applicable to *all believers*. This will be evident, if we consider that every true believer answers the characters by which the word describes the persons to whom these promises do belong, and for whose salvation the promises do engage. For instance: are they described by their trusting in God, as where the Psalmist says, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever?" Psal. cxxv. 1. This part of the character is ever found with true believers: it is an essential property of faith, to be trusting in the Lord. Faith teaches, directs, and, so far as it prevails, it enables the soul of a believer to trust God in the way of his covenant. He trusts God with all his concerns, whether relating to soul or body: he trusts in him for all the blessings and benefits which he has promised to give, through his Son, that his people may be safe, easy, and comfortable here, as well as happy, blessed, and glorious hereafter: and where there is no trusting in God, there is no faith.

Again, are the heirs of the promise described by their humility, as where it is said, "the Lord giveth grace unto the humble?" James iv. 6. As to this, there can be no more certain evidence of true humility, than a man's quitting his own righteousness, his renouncing all confidence in the flesh, and truly submitting himself to be saved entirely and only by the righteousness of Christ, and the strength of his Redeemer. Nor can there be a more manifest proof of true humility, than a believer's deliberate, resolved, and cheerful resignation of himself to

the command, conduct, and disposal of his heavenly Lord and Master.

Once more; are the heirs of the promise described by their affection and love to Christ; as where the apostle says, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?" Eph. vi. 24. What clearer proof can there be of an hearty affection to the dear Redeemer, than a person's sacrificing his most beloved lust and corruption, and his suffering the loss of those things, which are dearest to the flesh, that he may win Christ, and be found faithful in his adherence to him?

And are not all these things wrought by the Spirit in the heart of every believer? Do they not, in fact, enter the character of all the saints? We may therefore justly infer, that the saints are all interested in the promises which engage for a final perseverance, and consequently they shall be as mount Sion, which cannot be removed.

And, since this must be understood of a continuance in a state of grace, we may learn, from hence, that all the cautions and threatenings, all the commands and exhortations in Scripture, which have any reference to persons "continuing in the faith, or their holding the beginning of their confidence steadfast to the end," should never be so interpreted, as to clash with these, and the like clear and full declarations of the word. But this is evidently done, when those cautions and exhortations are pretended to be so many pregnant evidences, that a true believer may fall from a state of grace; or when they are reckoned plain indications, that God hath made no absolute decree, or promise, that he shall not do so.

However, it may be a happy means of preserving us from the bad influence of such a mistaken interpretation, if we carefully observe how much the Scriptures abound with promises of this kind, as I have shown in my former discourse, under the general proof of the point. But, for the further confirmation of the argument, which has now been insisted upon, I shall here add a few remarks concerning the promises of salvation made to believers.

(1.) The salvation which is promised, must be meant of an *eternal* salvation. Accordingly when Christ says, "He that believeth in me, shall never die," John xi. 26, and "he that believeth, shall be saved," Mark xvi. 16, the meaning is, such shall be blessed with eternal life, with eternal salvation.

(2.) These promises are made to *believers* as such. They respect not the strength or the high degree of faith, but the truth of it; and are therefore applicable to persons upon their first entrance into a state of grace. The denomination of the persons to whom they belong, is founded on that change of state, and on those vital actings of the new creature, which are

common to all who are born again. He that has been quickened and enabled to perform those essential actings of faith, which relate to the receiving Christ as the Lord his righteousness and strength, is truly a believer, and, in this sense, as much a believer, as he who has had a further growth in grace; and consequently they that are weak in faith, have the same interest in the promise, as they that are strong.

(3.) These promises comprehend an inseparable *connexion* between *true faith* and *eternal salvation*. This must be granted; or the absolute truth of the proposition, in which the promise is contained, must be denied. If the possibility of a believer's missing of salvation must be allowed, the absoluteness of the truth of the promise will be destroyed; for it might then be said, He that believeth may not be saved. And were it certain that any believers would, in fact, fall from grace, and perish at last, it might be indifferently affirmed, with equal truth, some believers shall be saved, and some shall not. The construction that might then be put upon the proclamation of grace, and grant of salvation made to believers in the promise, would amount to little more than this: He that believeth may be saved. The matter would thus rest on probability only; and what does so, may never come to pass. Thus, according to the scheme which pleads for a possibility of falling from grace, the salvation of believers is reduced to an uncertainty at least. But this is what the style of several of the promises will by no means admit of; which runs thus: "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation," John v. 24. "He shall not be confounded." 1 Pet. ii. 6. "He shall not be ashamed." Rom. ix. 33. No such interpretation of the promises as that scheme requires, can suit with the language of Scripture in this affair, or support the certainty of those glorious declarations, which tell us, that they who believe are "passed from death unto life," John v. 24, that "he that hath the Son hath life," 1 John v. 12, yea, "he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life," John iii. 36, "and these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." 1 John v. 13. It follows, that,

(4.) These promises of salvation must be understood to give an *assurance* of the believer's final perseverance.

Just as when God promised Abraham, Gen. xvii. 8, that his seed should inherit the land of Canaan, he did thereby engage to give Abraham a seed, to raise up his posterity, and protect them through all surrounding dangers, till they were put into the possession of the promised land. In like manner, by God's promising salvation to believers, he engages for every thing necessary to its being obtained; and a final perseverance in grace, being, as all allow, indispensably necessary thereunto,

his promise of salvation must be construed to carry in it an inviolable engagement for that in particular.

Let these considerations be duly weighed, and it will appear to be wrong in any to make the believer's continuing in faith, such a condition of his salvation, as shall render this a matter of suspense, or his falling from grace, a thing that is possible: the solemn engagements of the Lord himself being an infallible security for the one, and an immovable guard against the other.

Hence it appears, that believers have good reason to remain unshaken in their holy confidence; that when God has once put his covenant fear into the hearts of any, such shall not be suffered to depart from him, Jer. xxxii. 40, no, but he who has infused the principle of grace, will preserve it, cause it to spring, and make it thrive; for he has promised "to be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon," Hos. xiv. 5.

Nor should we suffer these, or the like promises, to be wrested out of our hands, nor our souls to be deprived of the comfort of them, though it should be suggested that those words did respect a national blessing, since their particular and special application to the case of every believer is warranted by our Lord himself, where he says, "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance," Mat. xiii. 12; as likewise by the professed declaration of the design of his coming, which was not only that his people "might have life, but that they might have it more abundantly," John x. 10.

And, through a becoming faith in the immutability and certainty of these and many other promises and declarations of the word, we may be assured, that no true believer ever did, or ever shall, fall from a state of grace; but, in what happy soul soever the good work is once begun, it shall be carried on and completed.

As a further proof of this, let us proceed to another head of argument, proposed to be insisted upon: namely,

2dly. The Redeemer's *care* over his people, together with his peculiar relation unto, and union with them. I shall consider this head distinctly under two branches; and shall take notice,

1. Of Christ's care over his people. We may observe, that several of the titles given to the Mediator, are such as denote a charge or trust committed to him; as where he is termed "God's servant," Isa. xlii. 1, "the messenger of the covenant," Mal. iii. 1, "the apostle and high-priest of our profession," Heb. iii. 1, &c. When our Lord was upon earth, he constantly acknowledged that he acted as Mediator, by commission from his Father; that he "came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him," John vi. 38. Now, the

purport of his commission is summed up by himself, when he says, "This is the Father's will, which hath sent me; that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day," John vi. 39. That his people might have the comfort of knowing that their salvation was included in his charge, when he repeats the declaration in the next verse, he varies his terms, saying, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life," ver. 40, *i. e.* may certainly have it. This was the design of the trust committed to him.

But for this, even for the whole of it, did he engage, when he said, "I will raise him up at the last day," ver. 40. And his positive engagement for that event must imply an engagement for his people's final perseverance in grace; this being of such absolute necessity, that without it they could not be raised to life everlasting. Now, we may strongly argue, from our Saviour's faithfulness, that as he will never suffer any to pluck his people out of his hand, so neither will he suffer them to fall out of it, through any folly or madness of their own. He has expressly said, concerning his sheep, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John x. 28. After this, should it ever happen that any of his flock did perish, it would equally slur the glory of his word, whether their destruction was effected by an open enemy, or by something in themselves. Besides, it was their proneness to wander from God, that was one special reason of the Father's appointing, and of Christ's undertaking the office of a shepherd to watch over them. And if, after all his special and his solemn engagements for their safety, they should any of them perish at last, then the honour of his office, and the glory of his faithfulness must fall to the ground. But this, we are sure, can never be.

This text, then, does strongly conclude for the doctrine of the saints' perseverance; and this will appear more fully still, if we observe, that the words must be understood to respect the safety of Christ's sheep, in their passage through this wilderness; for it would by no means suit with the perfection and glory of heaven to apply the declaration in the latter part of the verse, "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," to the saints in that state, as some would have it. Since no unclean thing can so much as enter into the New Jerusalem, we may be confident no daring adversary can ever appear there to make so bold an attempt. This shows that all propriety of interpretation would be lost, should Christ's promise to blast all attempts for his people's ruin, be understood to relate to those upper regions, in which no such attempts can possibly be made.

We may further observe, that though, in the beginning of the verse, Christ speaks of his giving his sheep eternal life; yet even

this expression will be of no service to determine, as the same persons will have it, that the security there promised must be deferred till the saints shall come to the uninterrupted felicity of the world above. For this passage may be understood of Christ's effectually calling his people into a state of grace, and of his bringing them into the real enjoyment of communion with God; and thus of his giving them the beginning of eternal life, even in this world. Such an explication would be very agreeable to matters of fact, and consonant to other places, where it is said, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life;" and then all pretence for understanding the safety promised in the text, to relate principally to the heavenly state, would be wholly precluded. But granting the phrase should here be understood of the future blessedness, it will then show us what shall certainly be the result and issue of our Saviour's present care over his flock, but will still be far from suggesting that his sheep must first be received into glory, before they shall share in his protection.

Thus you see, that notwithstanding all the endeavours of some to bear down the testimony of this scripture, yet, upon a fair construction and due consideration of it, we might venture the proof of our doctrine to rest upon its single evidence.

2. I shall next take notice of Christ's *relation* to the saints, and his *union* with them.

Each of these particulars would bear a distinct consideration; but, since the blessings themselves are inseparable, I shall blend them together under this head, and briefly show in what light these things are set in the word of God, and what deductions pertinent to our present subject may be drawn from them.

There are many images made use of in Scripture, by which the nearness of this relation, and the strictness of this union are represented. The places in which they are contained, are abundantly known: such, for instance, as these, where it is said, for the comfort and encouragement of the church, that "her Maker is her Husband," Isa. liv. 5; "her Saviour is her Head," Eph. v. 23. And this not in a political sense, merely as a prince is the head of his subjects, but in allusion to the natural sense of the word. Accordingly believers are expressly termed the "members of Christ's body, of his flesh, and of his bones," verse 30. Again, he is said to be "the vine, they the branches," John xv. 5.

From such passages and comparisons as these, I apprehend, we may justly infer that there cannot be a stricter union between any two things in the world, than there is between Christ and his people: further, that this union respects every particular believer. And in consequence hereof, he has such a communion with Christ, as will infallibly secure his standing in grace. All the saints having communion with Christ in his

death, their iniquities, by which the presence of God, and the renewed supplies and succours of his grace are forfeited, shall be pardoned. He being wounded for their transgressions, and the chastisement of their peace being laid upon him, by his stripes they are and shall be healed. Through the virtue of his death, then, all the blessings of the covenant are properly constituted and confirmed to be the sure mercies of David. Again, having communion with him in his life, he, who is their Head of righteousness, is also their Head of vital influence, from whom strength is derived, according to his effectual working in every part of his mystical body; and this communication shall be according to the measure that is best suited to answer every design intended by their present establishment and final salvation.

Nothing short of the believer's expectation and assured hope of this salvation at last, can be a proper return for some of Christ's last breathings; when he said to his disciples, for the encouragement and comfort of all his people, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. Which words are a just foundation, whereupon to build an assurance that believers can no more fall from their relation to Christ, and that state of grace into which he has called them, than Christ himself can be plucked out of his throne, or fall from his glory.

Some, indeed, would insinuate, that though his people shall never perish, through any defect on his part, for he will be faithful to them while they abide faithful to him; yet believers, being not natural, but mystical members, may therefore cut off themselves, and so perish. But to this, and all suggestions of the like kind, I think a just and full reply may be given from the truths we have now advanced; for Christ's headship is not an empty title; nor are his relations mere insignificant names, but these are eminently filled up with that divine affection, tenderness, and compassion, which infinitely transcends the highest degree of love and pity that can be found with the nearest and dearest relations in the world. We may therefore conclude, that a woman, yea, that the most tender and affectionate among women, may sooner forget her sucking child, and, through want of compassion to the fruit of her body, neglect either the food or medicines necessary for its nourishment and preservation, than Christ can forget or forsake any of his members, Isa. xlix. 15. There can be no room to doubt but he will be ever mindful of them, to uphold and establish them, "forgiving all their iniquities, and healing all their diseases," Psal. ciii. 3.

Were we to consider Christ as a Shepherd only, we might, from thence, infer the perpetual security and eternal safety of all his people; for, should his sheep fall as the prey of wolves, or as the spoil of robbers, or should they perish through a



spreading scab, or their own wanderings, the damage and loss would be still the same. We may be confident, therefore, not a sheep of his shall perish by one of these means, more than by another.

But, when we consider the nearness of believers to Christ, as they are his mystical body, and thus the beloved parts of himself, we have then the strongest assurance possible that they shall ever be preserved; for what man, in his right mind, did ever yet hate his own flesh, or suffer the meanest part of himself to mortify and perish, when it was in his power to prevent it? We may be sure then, Christ will never suffer any of the saints to fall finally or totally, while their union with him does remain. And that this shall continue ever, is plain from the resemblance which it bears to the eternal union between his Father and himself; which resemblance is supposed and referred to by Christ, when praying for his people, he says, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee;" and again, "that they may be one, even as we are; I in them, and thou in me," John xvii. 21, 22. And this resemblance lies particularly in the perpetual and endless duration of the union. This everlasting union between Christ and his people, stands then as a firm and constant support of the invincible perseverance of all the saints.

There is one argument more, which remains to be considered; and that is taken from,

3dly, The *inhabitation* and constant *residence* of the Spirit of God in the souls of believers.

That the Spirit of God is given to every believer, may be proved from those words of the apostle, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. All true disciples of Christ partake not only of the gifts, but of the graces of the Spirit. This is evident, in that he "quickens them," John vi. 63; "they are born of the Spirit," John iii. 5, "and led by the Spirit," Rom. viii. 14, and do share in those graces of faith, love, meekness, &c., which are the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. I need not stay to insist upon this, nor to show that where he does constantly reside in any, these shall be enabled to endure to the end. All this, I presume, will be allowed.

That which my argument does more immediately oblige me to prove, is the *constancy* of his abode in the hearts of his people. And for this, I think, we have a strong proof in our Saviour's request, which is equivalent to a promise; "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John xiv. 16, 17. That the benefit

of this request belongs to all the saints, appears from hence, because the discriminating mark here applied to the disciples, did not distinguish them from the other believers, but only from the men of the world. I may add, the very mark by which they are described, is found upon every true believer, distinguishing him from the world, as really as it did the disciples themselves: for all believers have a saving knowledge of the Spirit, and an experimental acquaintance with him in his gracious dealings, and sanctifying operations. We may therefore be assured he dwells in them, and abides with them for ever.

But, in opposition to this, we are told, that they who have been the temple of God, by virtue of his Spirit's dwelling in them, may so corrupt this temple, as to be destroyed; that they may provoke the Spirit wholly to depart to their utter ruin: for the proof of which, these words of the apostle are quoted; "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy," 1 Cor. iii. 17.

To set this matter in a true light, we are to remember, that the temple of God, even in its metaphorical sense, when applied to the saints, falls under a two-fold consideration. Sometimes it is to be understood of the saints, collectively; at other times, it is meant of them as distributively considered. In the former sense, by the temple of God is meant a gospel church; in the latter, a particular believer.

Now, in the place that is quoted, the apostle speaks of the saints collectively, as "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;" this we may learn from his own expressions, where he says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" again, "which temple ye are," ver. 16, 17, where it is plain he speaks of them collectively, because the word *temple*, in the singular number, is joined with a pronoun personal in the plural. This must be allowed then, that by the temple, is there meant a church of Christ.

Next, let us see what is meant by defiling this temple of God. To this purpose, we must observe what the apostle had been treating of in the preceding verses. From the tenth to the sixteenth verse, he shows the different event of the ministry of different persons; particularly in the fifteenth verse, he signifies the unhappy consequence of the labours of some, who, though they were right in the foundation, yet were very wrong in the superstructure. After this, he immediately proceeds to show the certain destruction of men of corrupt minds, who have no regard, either that their preaching, or that their own souls, might be built upon Christ, the sure foundation. And then declares, that *if any man defile*, (or, as it is in the margin, *if he corrupt*,) *the temple*, that is, the church of God, either by such error in doctrine, such superstition or innovations in worship, or

by any such vile practices, as deface the beauty of the church, or threaten the destruction and overthrow of the church-state itself, such a one *would God destroy*.

This I take to be a fair explication of the text, which, at once, sets aside all that has been advanced from it, in opposition to the argument that we are upon: for no colourable objection can be raised from it, against the Spirit's constant and perpetual residence in the souls of his people, but upon a supposition, that the person who defiles the temple of God, is a true believer, and thus himself a temple of the Holy Ghost; whereas no supposition of this kind is contained in the apostle's representation of his case. On the contrary, he intimates, that the man who is supposed to defile the temple, is in such a state of ignorance and darkness, and such a stranger to any experimental acquaintance with Christ, the foundation, as can never be allowed concerning any true believer; nay, further, that he is guilty of that self-deceit, of that craftiness and carnal policy, and of those vain thoughts which are altogether inconsistent with the Spirit's dwelling in him, 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19. So that this text when rightly opened, gives not the least countenance to the notion, "that they who have been the temple of God, by virtue of his Spirit's dwelling in them, may so corrupt themselves, as to be destroyed."

As to any further pretended plea for the Spirit's total departure, taken from the defilements which they may possibly contract, who are, indeed, his temple; I think, a sufficient reply might be given, from what we have already proved out of the sacred writings under the last head, concerning the abiding union between Christ and his people. But I shall add, that if all the rebellions committed by them, while they were in their natural state, could not hinder the Spirit's approach, nor exclude them from the benefit of his entrance at their regeneration, then surely no miscarriage, committed after their effectual calling, shall cause him wholly to depart, and leave them, his continuance being secured through the redemption of Christ and his intercession; "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 10.

This point then of the Spirit's constant residence in the hearts of his people, stands firm against all opposition; and, in consequence thereof, the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance remains unshaken: for how shall the Spirit abide, as the Paraclete, Advocate, or Comforter of his people, unless he continues to be their Sanctifier? And since his constant residence is promised, under all those characters, we may be confident his people can never fall from grace.

Thus I have gone through all the arguments proposed for the defence of this doctrine, though not all that might have

been brought; for I thought it better to give what I have produced, a full consideration, than by mentioning more, to have prevented my setting these in so clear and strong a light, as I was firmly persuaded their matter would bear. And I would hope, that the great truths which I have thus collected from Scripture, concerning the immutability of the purpose and promise of God, concerning the Redeemer's care over his people, with his peculiar relation unto and union with them, and concerning the constant abode and inhabitation of the Spirit in the souls of believers, will be of sufficient weight to settle the judgment, and establish the faith of the saints in this important article. And I would humbly trust, that, through the blessing of God, they may be the happy means of promoting the comfort and joy of believers, though they should fail of success, as to the conviction of those who are otherwise minded, which yet is what I heartily wish, and shall earnestly pray for.

But, that this may be effected, there remains a further expedient now to be used: and thus I pass on to the last general head; under which,

III. I shall make a *reply* to the principal *objections*, which, some apprehend, forbid their assent to the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, as it has been here stated and asserted.

At my entrance upon this part of my work I must observe, that our doctrine being founded upon the most express and full declarations of Scripture, I shall not think myself obliged to take much notice of any objections but what are grounded upon some passage in the word of God, and thus seem in the judgment of the objector, to be countenanced by divine authority. Accordingly I shall wave a nice consideration of the metaphysical and abstruse reasonings of those who are pressing this and other points of divine revelation, with the difficulties which in their sentiments attend the reconciling the predetermination and absolute decree of God, with the liberty of man as a free agent. Besides, this controversy, as I apprehend, more properly belongs to another topic, and is usually handled by those that treat of the decrees and foreknowledge of God. It cannot therefore justly demand to be particularly considered here.

As to all objections then of this kind, which would insinuate, that to ground the infallibility of the saints' perseverance in grace upon the divine decree, is to give up the freedom of man's will, I shall only answer in general, that though the counsel and purpose of God, respecting the salvation of his people, be peremptory and absolute, and shall be infallibly accomplished, as it is declared in the promise; yet the decree of God does not offer any violence to the will of man, nor take away the liberty or contingency of second causes. For it is sufficient unto human liberty, that a man acts without constraint, and out of choice. And is it not thus with the saints as to their perseverance in

grace? Is not the new nature in them an overflowing spring of holy desires? Do not they act freely in the exercise of every grace, whether of faith or repentance, of hope or love? Is not the frame which disposes their souls for these spiritual actings, the happy temper which they choose? Is it not what they daily pray for? When obtained, is not the experience of it most delightful? And do not they esteem it as matter of the greatest thankfulness? Wherein then can there be an infringement of the liberty of the will, or any force to be complained of?

And as to the most difficult parts of their holy walk, even those which require the severest acts of self-denial, such as the mortification of sin, and the trying duties of humility, patience, and the forgiveness of enemies, do not they enter upon these with the most mature deliberation, and with the firmest resolution? Are not all performed with cheerfulness? Or is it not their grief and burden, that they cannot engage herein with the utmost vigour of soul, and the greatest readiness? How is there any necessity then imposed upon them? Or what constraint are they under? None sure; unless it be that of love to a Saviour, and desire to be conformed to his image: or that of gratitude to their heavenly Father, with a holy breathing after the enjoyment of his presence, both here and hereafter. And is it losing their liberty to be under the powerful influence of such a blessed constraint as this, if it must be called a constraint? As the liberty of the will is entirely preserved in the things we have now mentioned, so there are no further instances belonging to the saints' perseverance in grace, that can be produced, by which it is more likely the destruction or loss of their freedom could be proved.

Upon the whole, then, it may as well be said, that there is no liberty in the pure actings of the saints or angels in heaven, who love, and cannot but love, admire, and adore our Saviour, and our God, as to say that the holy actings of believers upon earth are not free and voluntary. We conclude, therefore, that though the decree which appoints the believer's salvation, includes these things as means necessary thereunto; and that though this decree being effectual, independent, and immutable, does establish such a certainty of the event, with respect both to the means and the ends, as renders it impossible that either should fail; yet the saints' freedom in acting is not destroyed thereby. No; no more than the liberty of human action in eating or drinking is destroyed by the decree which fixes the number of a man's days,\* which appoints the necessary means of his support, and which effectually secures the use thereof,

\* If any shall question whether God has determined the bounds of the life of man, they may find this matter clearly discussed, and the truth of the affirmative well established, and abundantly confirmed from Scripture, in Mr. Ridgeley's *Body of Divinity*, Vol. I. p. 256—260.

till the determined period of his life approaches; or, in the language of Job, "till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day," Job. xiv. 5, 6.

I shall now consider the objections taken from Scripture. But I do not think it necessary for me to speak distinctly to every portion of Scripture, from which objections have been raised: I shall select a few of those which are generally supposed to be of the greatest moment; and, in my remarks upon these, I shall endeavour to hint such things as may serve for an answer to the like objections when taken from any other. And here let me remind you, that I think it but just to make such an application of the distinctions we have settled, when the point was stated, as the course of our reasoning shall now require, without adding any thing further for their confirmation.

I shall now propose the objections which are to be considered, and shall sum them up under these three heads. 1. Some are taken from the instances of apostasy recorded in Scripture. 2. Other objections are taken from the threatenings of the word, in case of apostasy. 3. Others again are taken from the commands and exhortations, from the cautions and directions which frequently occur in the inspired writings.

1. I shall consider the objections taken from the instances of *apostasy*, recorded in Scripture. All objections of this kind do constantly proceed from a mistake in one of these two things: (1.) In taking a partial backsliding for a total apostasy: (2.) Or else in taking a falling from the doctrines of the gospel, and a profession of religion, for a falling from a state of grace.

(1.) In some of these objections a *partial backsliding* is mistaken for a *total apostasy*. This is the case when any of the precious saints of the Lord, who were the excellent of the earth, are thrust into the dead list of total apostates. The three that are commonly pointed out upon this occasion are David, Solomon, and Peter. As to Peter, we have already proved that his faith did not totally fail, for he who was always heard, had prayed it should not, Luke xxii. 32.

As to David likewise, we have sufficient reason to believe that his grace did not fail totally, and that the Spirit of God did never wholly depart from him; if we observe that upon his recovery from his backsliding, when he was in the most penitential frame, and must be supposed to have had the most just sense of his condition, even then, though he pleaded that God would "restore unto him the joy of his salvation," Psal. li. 12, for this he had lost; yet we never read of his praying that God would restore unto him his Spirit, a plain intimation, that his presence and residence was never totally lost. David knew indeed that he had incurred the forfeiture, and therefore he pleads, "Take not thine holy Spirit from me," Psal. li. 11. But his very language in this petition, supposes that the Spirit did

still continue with him. And here I would observe by the way, that since the Spirit was not taken from David, under all the provocations which attended the falls there confessed and lamented, we have no reason to imagine that he is taken from any other in whose heart he has once dwelt, as a Spirit of grace and regeneration.

Finally, as to the instance of Solomon, though the account we have of him be but short, yet there are some passages in his story, which make his case look more like a partial backsliding, than a total apostasy. For how strongly soever this be expressed, still by its being said, "His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father," 1 Kings xi. 4, and that he "went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father," ver. 6, it seems as if the Scriptures intended that his declension should be understood of an abatement of his former zeal, and not of a total apostasy. This is confirmed by what we meet with in another place, where the people that set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, and thus strengthened the kingdom of Judah, are said to have "walked in the way of David and Solomon," 2 Chron. xi. 17. Whereby it is at least intimated, that as to the general course of Solomon's walk, his way was the same with that of David: and since the way of both is there mentioned with a mark of divine approbation, and that after their death, we may conclude, that they both began and ended well, and that, notwithstanding their gross backslidings, yet they were neither of them guilty either of a final or total apostasy.

(2.) This objection drawn from the various instances of apostasy, is sometimes founded upon a mistake in another thing, viz: the taking a falling from the *doctrines of the gospel*, and a *profession of religion*, for a falling from a *state of grace*.

That there have been instances of apostasy, with respect to the doctrines of the gospel, is a sad truth, abundantly confirmed by the testimony of former and later times. Thus some of the Galatians, after they had received the knowledge of the way of salvation by the righteousness of Christ alone, turned back to their old notions: and seeking again to be justified by the law, they are said to have "fallen from grace," Gal. v. 4, i. e. from the doctrine of grace.

Thus we read of others, who concerning the truth have erred, of whom was Hymeneus and Philetus, who by their influence and example, "overthrew the faith of some," 2 Tim. ii. 18. So that none ever pretend to deny but a doctrinal faith may be and frequently is overthrown. But this is very far from proving that the faith of true believers, which is the operation of God, and which worketh by love, can ever be eradicated. Nay, though it is allowed that some men, when they have fallen from the doctrines of the Gospel, and changed their opinion,

did likewise desert the apostles, and even abandon the ways of God; yet such instances as these, how numerous soever, cannot give the least strength to the objection.

Because it is declared by an inspired apostle, "they were not of us, though they went out from us," 1 John ii. 19. Here is a plain intimation that the persons who went out from the church, were really different from true believers: and wherein did the difference lie? not so much in any thing that was external, as in the internal frame and disposition of their minds, or the inward state and relation of their souls towards God. They were of the society and visible fellowship of the saints, of the same profession with them, they shared in many of the like gifts of the Spirit, and engaged in the same worship with them. But still they wanted the gracious *anointing from the Holy One*, John ii. 20, which true believers had received, and which did abide in them that received it.

But a late writer, to prove that true believers themselves may fall from grace, has quoted the passage which follows the apostle's charge to Timothy, "Holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck," 1 Tim. i. 19. In his arguing upon the place, he tells us, that to "put away a good conscience," belongs to them alone who once had it.

But the proper signification of the original word intimates no such thing, but rather that they always refused it: as appears from the use of the verb in several other places. Particularly, where the Jews are said to "put away the gospel," which they never received, but opposed with contradiction and blasphemy, Acts xiii. 46. The same word is used concerning the Israelites, who put away Moses, or *thrust him from them*, and would not obey, Acts vii. 39. In like manner, when God in his gospel had set before these apostates the way of obtaining a good conscience, they refused to hearken, and thus might properly be said to *put away* a good conscience, though they never had it; because they refused to accept that righteousness and grace which only could have produced it.

All objections therefore against our doctrine, founded upon such instances as these of Hymeneus and his associates, proceeded upon a mistake, in imagining those to have had true grace who had it not.

Nor will the passage in the epistle of Peter, 2 Pet. ii. 18—22, which some have laid a mighty stress upon, prove that the professors who fell away, were truly sanctified. The apostle, indeed, speaks of some "who had escaped the pollutions of the world;" yea, "were clean escaped from them who lived in error;" and tells us, "these were again entangled therein," and that "the latter end was worse with them than the beginning;" for "after they had known the way of righteousness, they



turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Several remarks might be made to show that all which is here spoken of these persons, is far from amounting to a proof that they were truly sanctified; but this will be determined at once, if we observe how the apostle applies to them the proverb which he uses in the last verse of the chapter; by which it plainly appears, that how much soever they were reformed, as to their outward conversation, yet their hearts were never changed. Under all their reformation, they still retained their old bestial nature. They were always dogs, but were never the children of God; they were always swine, and never the true sheep of Christ.

Such instances as these, though frequently urged for this purpose, are far from proving that true believers have apostatized. I proceed,

2. Some objections are taken from the *threatenings* of the word. Many, indeed, are the threats which God has denounced against those who shall fall away, and who shall not continue steadfast in their faith, and in their obedience to the end. Hence some have argued, that it is possible for the saints themselves to fall from grace; for they think a threat of that which cannot possibly befall us, is irrational; and that God himself should threaten what his own decree and promise have rendered impossible, they say, is very difficult to believe.

But the difficulty, I apprehend, may be removed, if we consider that many events, which were possible in their own nature, do, by reason of the infallible guard set by the divine determination, become impossible, not in themselves, but with regard to the immutability of the decree and promise of God. Now that God should threaten that which was possible in itself, and that which, the circumstances, relation, and tendency of things considered, was likely to happen; and that moreover, which, the divine purpose and promise abstracted, would certainly come to pass, is neither irrational to suppose, nor difficult to believe; especially when we remember that the truth of this is confirmed by matter of fact, in the story of Paul and his company; an instance as full to our purpose, as the argument could require; for, in their case, we may observe, the decree and promise of God had passed, that there should "be no loss of any man's life among them, but of the ship only," Acts xxvii. 22.

An angel was sent to inform Paul that God had "given him all them that sailed with him," ver. 23. This promise then ascertained the safety of the company, and rendered the loss of their lives an event that was impossible; as must be allowed, if we would not rob God of what he has always challenged and assumed, as his peculiar glory, viz. that his decrees are immutable, and his promises infallible; and yet their destruction, or

the loss of their lives, the very thing which God had infallibly promised should not befall them, was threatened, when Paul said, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved," ver. 31. Here then was a threat of that which God's own decree and promise had rendered impossible. And it shows threats of destruction, in case of apostasy, to be of no force to prove, as some have pretended, that there is no decree or promise to render the saints' perseverance in grace so secure and infallible, as to make their falling from grace a thing impossible.

Some threatenings are likewise turned to a wrong use, in being made to relate directly and immediately to true believers, though it does not appear, from their context, that this was at all intended. I shall name two places, which have been remarkably misconstrued this way; one is that in the prophecy of Ezekiel: "But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass, that he hath trespassed, and in his sin, that he hath sinned, in them shall he die," Ezek. xviii. 24. It is but just, I apprehend, that our interpretation of this text should be regulated by a distinction between a ceremonial or moral righteousness, and that which is truly evangelical and spiritual. A foundation for this distinction may be observed in Paul's expression; where he declares of himself, that "touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless," Phil. iii. 6; and yet at that time, viz. before his conversion, he was a blasphemer and a persecutor, one destitute of true grace. This distinction may be further confirmed, from the words of our Saviour, when he tells his disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," Mat. v. 20. And if according to this distinction, the threat be applied, as it ought, to persons that had only a ceremonial or moral righteousness, then it may be allowed that many such righteous persons did turn from their righteousness, and die in their sins; which is no more than to say, that false professors and mere formalists proved apostates; and this is a case that frequently happens.

But, with a design to overthrow such an explication of the text as this, it has been said, "that if a man should only turn away from his counterfeit and hypocritical righteousness, he should rather live than die, in as much as he would put off the wolf to put on the lamb." But certainly they were betrayed into an unaccountable weakness who argued after this manner: for persons who have kept up an hypocritical profession many years together, may, at length, shake off the very form of reli-

gion, and sink into the most vile and open abominations; and shall this be called a putting off the wolf to put on the lamb? No sure; they only put off the sheep's clothing, and now appear to be wolves, as they always were, though long disguised.

Another passage in Scripture, which has been misconstrued the same way as the former, is that in the epistle to the Hebrews; where it is said, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance." Heb. vi. 4—6.

Some have pretended, that the persons here spoken of were truly gracious. This ought to be proved, indeed, before the passage can be reasonably urged as an objection against our doctrine; but since it is not asserted of them, in the text or context, either expressly, or in terms equivalent, that they did believe or perform any other act, which could only flow from the vital principle of grace, the pretence that they were true believers, can be no more than a bare presumption.

Here it may be asked, does not the sentence, which declares it to be "impossible to renew them again unto repentance," imply that they once had true repentance? I answer: if the phrase be carefully observed, it will appear it does not; for it is not said, "it is impossible to renew them unto repentance (*again*)," but "to renew them (*again*) unto repentance." There is some difference, I apprehend, between these two modes of expression. Though the former might have led us to think that they had once been partakers of repentance; yet the latter, which is the expression in the text, intimates no more, but there had been some sort of renovation or change, attended with a profession of religion, and some alteration in their outward conduct. Their illumination and convictions could hardly fail of producing such effects as these; but these may be, and are frequently wrought where the heart is not changed, or where men are not renewed in the spirit of their mind. Now, persons, in those circumstances, may fall from the strictness of their walk, and gradually sink into loose, immoral practices, till, at length, they settle in a course openly wicked and profane. When things are come to this pass, it is difficult, in all common cases, for such men to be renewed again, even to that sobriety and pureness which formerly adorned their conversation.

As to the persons to whom the apostle refers, it is said, indeed, to be "impossible to renew them again unto repentance;" that is, to bring them to repent of their vile apostasy, "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame;" acting herein the like part with

those who had the daring impudence to ascribe the divine works of Christ to a diabolical power. Now, this being done after their illumination, and in spite of all their convictions, they are supposed to have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost; and then it is no wonder their repentance was declared impossible, though the Scriptures never speak of the impossibility of repentance of any other sort of sinners under the gospel whatever.

From these considerations, we have reason to conclude, notwithstanding all that is contained in this sentence, that these apostates were never truly sanctified. This construction put upon their character, is confirmed by what presently follows, in the ninth verse: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation;" which expression must be understood to exclude the supposed apostates from having had any share in the special and saving blessings of the new covenant, and does by consequence declare them to have been always void of grace; so that there is not, in all the passage, the least matter of objection against the perseverance of true believers.

Having thus cleared up the two places which are generally thought to militate against our doctrine, the most directly of all the threatenings, I shall not enter upon a particular examination of any other, but only give a short reply to the objection taken from the words of the apostle, which denounce the sorest destruction against the man that shall "tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing," Heb. x. 25. Here the objection supposes that the apostate was the person said to be sanctified: but this supposition is built merely upon a grammatical mistake; for it is more agreeable to the known rules of construction to apply the *relative* to the *Son of God*, its immediate proper *antecedent*, who was sanctified or consecrated by the blood of the covenant. This connexion of the words being observed, the objection vanishes at once.

Thus, if the threatenings, pointed against apostates, were carefully examined, many of the objections, taken from them against the infallibility of the saints' perseverance, would be wholly precluded, and the rest would quickly be given up; for if the expressions by which they are thought to be supported were rightly explained, they would appear to declare no more than the Lord's utter abhorrence of apostasy, and righteous displeasure and wrath against those who draw back; but could never be justly construed to signify either that God has not a peculiar people, to whom he is resolved to be gracious, or that they who are once received into the special protection and care of heaven, may yet miss of salvation, and perish at last.

3. Some objections are taken from the *commands* and *exhor-*

*tations*, the *cautions* and *directions*, which frequently occur in the sacred writings.

These passages are supposed to be pregnant evidences that true believers may fall from grace, and reckoned to be so many arguments to prove, that God has made no absolute decree, or promise, that they shall not do so. It is said to be unreasonable to conceive, that the same Spirit of wisdom should absolutely declare that they shall not fall away, and yet be thus concerned to guard and caution them against what he has told them, was as impossible, as that God should fail of performing his promise.

Let this objection be enlarged upon, and strengthened to the utmost; yet, after all, it can have no more force against the promises which relate to the saints' perseverance, than it would have against those absolute promises regarding other matters, which are likewise attended with exhortations, instructions, and cautions, respecting the doubtful conduct of the person concerned, and given in the name and by authority of the same God, who had before ascertained the event by his promise. Let us, then, transfer the objection to some particular cases recorded in Scripture, and its weakness will soon be discovered. For instance, did not the apostle Paul, when he gave the centurion and soldiers the caution, saying, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved," Acts xxvii. 31, speak by the same Spirit of wisdom, as when he told them before there should be "no loss of any man's life, but of the ship only?" verse 22. Can we imagine that the vigilance and caution required, were an evidence that God had never promised to give the apostle all them that sailed with him? Must we believe that the destruction of some of that company might have happened, though a God of infinite faithfulness had engaged there should be no loss of any man's life among them? Did the apostle intend, by his caution, to weaken the credit of the promise? or did the assurance he had given of their safety, render the caution ineffectual? Neither he nor they did thus understand things in that affair: why, then, should they be thus interpreted in the case before us?—Finally, would it not be a vain, not to say a wild construction of the apostle's caution about keeping the mariners in the vessel, to understand it as telling the centurion and soldiers that it highly concerned them to fear, lest the God of truth should be unfaithful to his promise? Yet some have pretended, that if an absolute promise for the safety of believers be granted, nothing short of this must be the construction we are to put upon the cautions and exhortations, whereby they are directed and quickened to their duty. But sure, they that are influenced by the sentiments and conduct of the inspired writers, can never agree to the perverse turn of such extravagant insinuations.

Again, in what stronger terms can the certainty of an event be fixed, than was that of Solomon's building the temple, and yet with what a variety of cautions and commands, of exhortations, instructions, and prayers, was the revelation of this absolute decree followed by David, who had received the promise, and did believe the certainty of its accomplishment? His expressions, upon that occasion, are very remarkable and direct to our purpose; they appear in the strongest light in 1 Chron. xxii. from verse 6, throughout.

There are other passages; as the angel's directions and cautions to Lot in particular, which look with the same unfavourable aspect upon these objections, and might be produced to show, that as exhortations, cautions, and commands, are not in those cases, made unnecessary by the absolute promise and unchangeable decree of God, so it is unreasonable in any to attempt, by these exhortations, &c. to vacate the promise, or annul the decree.

As to the perseverance of the saints, though the certainty thereof be declared in the promise, yet the justness and propriety of all the exhortations, &c. of the word relating thereto, might be made to appear, were we to consider the state of visible churches, how many persons there are having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; and were we also to observe the great imperfection of believers themselves, in this militant state, who have to conflict with innumerable lusts and passions within, as well as the most subtle and powerful enemies without. These circumstances universally attending, can it seem strange, that, after the strongest assurance of a believer's safety, professors should be warned to "look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God," Heb. xii. 15, and content himself with a profession of religion without its principle? or that the disciples should be exhorted "to put on the whole armour of God, that they may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand?" Eph. vi. 13. Instead therefore of turning such cautions and commands into objections against this doctrine, it seems more agreeable to infer from them, that the heart of the Redeemer is much set upon the salvation of his people; and, considering how frequently they occur, and with what strictness and solemnity they are constantly given, they plainly show that he does really interest himself in the perseverance of his saints, and is resolved no means shall be neglected, which would help to promote it. His diligence and care in pursuing such methods as these, are but the fruit of the immutability of his purpose to accomplish the design, and of the wisdom of his counsel, to bring it about in a way entirely suited to the nature of man, as a free agent. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Particularly,

1. Be diligent in the *performance of religious duties*. They are most likely to grow as the lily, who are most careful to be where the sun shines, the dew falls, and the Spirit blows; "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Look out with care to observe the motion of your enemies, look up with holy confidence for strength against them; for Christ will bring forth judgment unto victory, but no means or ordinances whatever can do it without him.

2. Endeavour to be much in the *exercise of grace*. Let your faith be daily fetching in fuel to keep up the flame of love; let this be so ardent, as to consume pride and every corruption, that you may walk humbly with your God, and continue patiently looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

3. Cherish the *motions of the blessed and Holy Spirit*. Want of attention to these is the main reason of our daily falls.

4. Shun the very *appearance of evil*. Observe when you begin to fall; let the smallest deviations from duty be heartily lamented; and be speedy in pleading with God to restore your souls, and establish your goings.

5. Lastly, *Trust in God* to perfect that which concerns you. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to manage your cause with God, and to keep all aright between him and you by his constant intercession. Trust in the Holy Ghost to manage the cause of God on your heart, to overcome your obstinacy and unbelief, to vanquish temptations, doubts, and fears, and to settle you in hope and comfort; that you may fight the good fight of faith, finish your course with joy, and, at length, receive the crown of righteousness and glory.

THE  
DOCTRINE OF  
THE RESURRECTION,  
STATED AND DEFENDED;

IN TWO SERMONS.

BY JOHN GILL, D.D.  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON I.

Acts xxvi. 8.—Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

THE doctrine of the *resurrection* of the body from the dead, is a doctrine of the utmost importance; for “if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain,” 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14. In this lecture, the doctrines of eternal election, original sin, particular redemption, satisfaction by Christ, efficacious grace in conversion, and final perseverance, have been well explained and defended among you; and, I hope, to your great comfort and establishment: but to what purpose are these truths taught, and of what avail will they be, if there is no *resurrection of the dead*?

The part assigned to me, in this lecture, being to explain and defend this truth, I shall attempt to do it in the following method:

- I. I shall observe that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead has not been credited by some; it has been accounted incredible.
- II. Notwithstanding, I shall endeavour to evince both the credibility and certainty of it.
- III. I shall inquire who, and what that is which shall be raised.
- IV. I shall consider the author of this stupendous work, and the particular concern which God the Father, Son, and Spirit, have therein.
- V. I shall show the importance and use of this doctrine.

I. It will not be improper to observe, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the body from the dead has not been *believed*



*by some*, but has been accounted absurd and incredible, though without any just reason, as will be shown hereafter, and as may be concluded from the words of my text.

This doctrine is of pure revelation, what the mere light of nature never taught men, and by which alone they being guided, have declared against. It has been denied, as Tertullian observes, by every sect of the philosophers. That the body was mortal, all agreed; that the soul was immortal, some of them asserted, though they had but dark and confused conceptions concerning its future separate existence; but that the body, when dead, should be raised again to life, was a subject of ridicule and contempt with them. Pliny calls it a childish fancy, vanity, and downright madness; as does also Cæcilius, in Minucius Felix, who likewise reckons it among old wives' fables. Celsus, in Origen, represents it as exceedingly detestable and abominable; and, of all the tenets of the Christians, this was had in the greatest contempt by Julian the emperor. The maintainers and abettors of this doctrine were always accounted by the heathen vain, trifling, and babbling fellows. Thus the Athenian philosophers of the Epicurean and Stoic sects mocked at the apostle Paul, when they heard him talk of the resurrection of the dead; "And some said, What will this babbler say?" Acts xvii. 18, 32. "Other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods; because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." They were so ignorant of this doctrine, that they took Jesus and the word used by the apostle for the resurrection, to be the names of some strange deities they had never heard of before; and therefore say, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." The heathen had no knowledge of this truth, no faith in it, nor hope concerning it. Hence they are described by the apostle Paul, as those who had *no hope*; when writing to the Thessalonians, he says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope," 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. By whom the apostle means not Christians, who had no hopes of the salvation of their departed friends and relations, but Pagans, who had neither faith nor hope in the resurrection of the dead, and a future state: and therefore had not that to support them under the loss of relations, which Christians had: wherefore the apostle adds, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him." Much after the same manner the Ephesians, whilst they were in their heathenish and unconverted estate, are described, Eph. ii. 12, by the same apostle; "At that time, says he, ye were without Christ:" that is, without any knowledge, promise, or expectation of the Messiah; "being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise;" *i. e.* ye were not so much as proselytes to

the Jewish religion, nor members of the Jewish church, and were entirely destitute of divine revelation; *having no hope* in the resurrection and future state, and so lived *without God in the world*, or as *atheists* in it, as it is in the original. And we may be the more induced to believe this to be, at least, part of the apostle's sense in these passages; since he, in his defences before Felix and Agrippa, represents the doctrine of the resurrection as the object of hope, as in Acts xxiv. 15: "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." And in Acts xxvi. 6, 7: "And now I stand and am judged, for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come; for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews." And then follow the words of my text, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

Some, indeed, have thought that the Gentiles had knowledge of the resurrection; which they collect partly from some notions and opinions of theirs, which seem to be a semblance with, and to be the broken remains of some tradition concerning it; and partly from express passages, wherein they think it is asserted. The notion of the heathen, from whence it is concluded that they had some hints of this doctrine, are these, viz. that the soul after death has a perfect human shape, and all the same parts, both external and internal, that the body has; that there is an equal duration of the soul and body after death; that there is a transmigration of souls into other bodies, especially human; that men may be translated body and soul to heaven; of which they give instances in Aristæus the Proconnesian, Alcmena, Hercules, Helena, Romulus, Cleomedes Astypalensis, and others: and that after certain periods and revolutions, when the stars and planets are in the same configuration and respect to one another, which they formerly had, the same men shall appear in the world, and the same things in succession shall be done in it, which formerly have been. For instance: Socrates shall be born at Athens of the same parents, be educated after the same manner, eat the same food, wear the same clothes, teach the same philosophy to the selfsame scholars, be accused by the same accusers, condemned by the same council, and die by the same poison. And so, my friends, according to this notion, we are all to meet together again in this place, in the same position and situation, you to hear, and I to preach; my subject is to be the doctrine of the resurrection, and I am to give you an account of the notions of the heathen with respect to it, as I now do. But this notion seems rather expressive of a regeneration, or a new birth, or a re-production of men and things, than a resurrection of them: and, I must confess, I cannot see what likeness

there is between this, or any other of the above mentioned notions, and the Christian doctrine of the resurrection from the dead.

The passages cited out of heathen authors, to show their knowledge of this doctrine, are such as the Greek verses of Phocylides; in which he expresses his hopes, that, in a very short time, the relics of the deceased should come forth out of the earth into light. But this poem is thought, by learned men, not to be the work of the heathen Phocylides, but either some anonymous Christian, or of some ancient Jewish writer. Besides, the verses referred to are not so expressed, but that it is thought they may very well be explained, so as to design the Pythagorean transmigration, and not the Christian doctrine of the resurrection. Theopompus and Eudemus Rhodius, in Diogenes Laertius, tell us that it was the opinion of the Persian Magi, *that men should live again, and be immortal*; this they received from their master and the founder of their sect, Zoroaster; who foretold, "that there should be a time when there would be a resurrection of all the dead." Nor need this be wondered at, since, from the best accounts of him, it appears that he was originally a Jew, both by birth and religion; was a servant to one of the prophets of Israel, and was well versed in the Holy Scriptures; out of which, without doubt, he took this doctrine, as he did some others, and which he taught his Magi, and adopted into his new religion. It may be more surprising to hear that Democritus, a corporeal philosopher, should have any notion of the resurrection of the dead; yet Pliny ascribes it to him, and derides him for it; though it has been thought by some, that he designs another Democritus, and not the philosopher, since this opinion cannot be very easily reconciled to his philosophy. But supposing that he, and not another, is meant, it is easy to observe how he came by it, seeing he not only lived in Egypt a while and conversed with the priests there, but travelled also into Persia, and learned of the Magi, theology as well as other things. The notions of several Pagan nations concerning the resurrection, are such as are either ascribed to them by authors not to be depended on, or plainly design transmigration, or are what they have borrowed from the Jews, either by conversing with them, or by reading of their writings; or else are the broken remains of some tradition, received from their ancestors, originally founded on divine revelation.

Some have argued from the Pagans' account of future punishments, to their belief of this doctrine; as when they represent Aridæus and other tyrants in hell, bound neck and heels together, their skin flayed, and they dragged through thorns and briers; when they speak of Sisyphus rolling a stone up a hill, which, when he has got it to the top, revolves upon his hands; of Ixion, fastened to a wheel in continual motion; of Tityus

having vultures always feeding upon his liver; and of Tantalus, in extreme thirst, standing in water up to his middle, with apples hanging over his head and near his mouth, and yet unable to extinguish his thirst with either. But, as a learned author observes, the reason why the heathen described the punishments of the damned after this manner, was not because they thought that their bodies were not left here on earth, but partly because it is the vulgar opinion, that the soul had all the same parts that the body has, and partly because such descriptions do more easily move and affect us; and it is not easy to describe the torments of the soul after any other manner. Our Lord, in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, adds the same author, speaks of them in the same manner, as if they had bodies; though what is related of them, is supposed to be before the resurrection, and their bodies are supposed to be yet in their graves.

As for some particular instances of persons who have been said to be raised from the dead to life, mentioned by heathen writers; as Alcestis by Hercules, Hippolytus by Æsculapius, with many others of the like kind; Acilius Aviola, Lucius Lamia, Ælius Tubero and others are said to revive on the funeral pile; Er Aramenius Pamphilus is reported to come to life, after he had been dead twelve days; Hercules is said to live after he had burnt himself; and Æsculapius to be raised after he had been struck with thunder, and who himself is said to restore one to life that was carrying to the pile; and much such a story is told of Apollonius Tyaneus. As for these instances, I say, they seem to be fabulous stories, and undeserving of credit. It is true, indeed, they have been credited by some of the heathen, and since they have, an argument from hence may be improved against them with great force, and for the doctrine of the resurrection; for if they can believe these things, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with them that God should raise the dead?" It may be, I have been too long on this subject; I therefore proceed to observe,

That the Jews were peculiarly blessed by God with that revelation which discovers the truth of this doctrine. In this they had the advantage of the Gentiles, "because that unto them were committed the oracles of God," Rom. iii. 1, 3; and yet there were some among them, as the sect of the Sadducees, which did not believe this truth; they said, "there was no resurrection," Mat. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8, though in this, as our Lord says, "they erred, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God," Mat. xxii. 29. In this the Hemero-baptists agreed with them; nor did the Essenes acknowledge the doctrine of the resurrection; yea, many of the Pharisees held the Pythagorean notion of the transmigration of souls into our bodies, which is asserted by Josephus, and, by learned men, collected from several passages of Scripture; which notion has been embraced by

many of that people. Nor is it so atonishing, as that, whereas, in the writings of the New Testament, there is a more clear discovery made of this truth, yet it has been denied and opposed by some who have had the advantage of them. It was the error of Hymeneus and Philetus, "that the resurrection was past already," 2 Tim. ii. 18. And some in the church at Corinth held "that there is no resurrection of the dead," 1 Cor. xv. 12. These were followed by Simon Magus, Saturninus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Valentinus, and others, too numerous to recite; and, of late, the doctrine of the resurrection of the same body is rejected by Socinians and Quakers. But to go on,

II. I shall now endeavour to evince both the *credibility* and *certainly* of the resurrection of the dead, notwithstanding it has been accounted by many absurd and incredible.

*First*, I shall show the *credibility* of it; and that,

1. From its *consistence* with the nature and perfections of God. If God is omnipotent and omniscient, as he certainly is, or he would not be God, the resurrection of the dead is not incredible; it is what may be.—God is *omnipotent*, he can do all things; what is impossible with men, is possible with him: he cannot do any thing, indeed, which argues imperfection and weakness, or implies a contradiction and falsehood: he cannot lie, or deny himself. But the resurrection of the dead is not an instance of either. It is no contradiction, that the dust, which was formed out of nothing, being reduced to dust, should again form the body which it once constituted; nor does this argue imperfection or weakness, but is a glorious instance of mighty power. A heathen once said, that it was not in the power of God to raise the dead; and to another, it seemed impossible for any to restore life to one that is dead: but if God could make all things out of nothing, as he did, and, from a dark and confused chaos, raise up such a beautiful structure as this world, and, out of the dust of the earth, form the body of man, and infuse into it, and unite it with a living and reasonable soul; then much more must he be able to raise up a dead body, the matter and substance of which now is, though in different forms and shapes, and reunite it to its soul, which still has a real existence: it is much easier to restore that which is, to its former condition, than to make to exist that which is not. God is also *omniscient*; he knows all things: he knows all the particles of matter, of which our bodies are composed; and, when they are dissolved into several parts, blown about by the several winds, crumbled into dust, reduced to ashes, evaporated into air, or digested into the bodies of other creatures, and have been transmuted into ten thousand forms and shapes; he knows where they are lodged, and what are the several receptacles and repositories of them, whether in the earth, air, or sea; and his all-discerning eye can distinguish those particles of matter which belong to one body,

from those which belong to another; and his almighty hand can gather and unite them together in their own proper bodies, and range them in their due place and order. If God then is omnipotent and omniscient, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead ought not to be accounted incredible.

As considering the omnipotence and omniscience of God, the resurrection of the dead may be, which also is no ways contrary to his goodness; so the justice of God makes it necessary that it should be: "God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works:" he is the Judge of all the earth, who will do right: and it is but just with him that those bodies which Christ has purchased with his blood, and the Spirit has sanctified by his grace, and which have suffered for his name's sake, should be raised again, that they, together with their souls, may enjoy that glory which is purchased for them, and which they are made meet to be partakers of; even as it is a righteous thing with God, to render tribulation to them that trouble them; and so consequently it is no act of injustice in God to raise the bodies, both of the righteous and the wicked, that they may receive the things done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil. These things being considered, it may be concluded, that the resurrection of the dead is not inconsistent with the perfections of God, and so not incredible. To these considerations I add,

2. The several instances of persons who have *been raised* from the dead, recorded in Scripture; such as the child of the widow of Zarephath, which came to life upon Elijah's prayer; and the child of the Shunamite, upon Elisha's; as also the man that was cast into Elisha's sepulchre, who revived and stood upon his feet, upon touching the prophet's bones, mentioned in the Old Testament: likewise Jairus's daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus, who were raised by Christ; and not to forget to mention the saints, who came out of their graves, after our Lord's resurrection: and also Dorcas, who was raised by Peter; as was Eutychus by the apostle Paul: which instances are recorded in the New Testament. My argument upon these instances is this; that what has been, may be; and if these instances of particular resurrections are to be credited, then the doctrine of the resurrection of all the dead is not to be accounted incredible. And,

3. It may not be improper if I should just mention some *typical* and *figurative* resurrections. The Scriptures give us an account of Jonah's lying three days and three nights in the whale's belly; and his deliverance from thence was a type of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The saving of Isaac from being sacrificed, was like a resurrection from the dead; and, indeed, "from thence Abraham received him in a figure," Heb. xi. 19. The redemption of the people of Israel

out of the Babylonish captivity, was a metaphorical resurrection, and signified by the reviving of dry bones; which was done by laying sinews, and bringing flesh upon them, covering them with skin, and putting breath into them. The budding and blossoming of Aaron's dry rod, is thought, by some, to be a figure of the resurrection of the dead. However, be that as it will, this may be observed, that if God could deliver Jonah out of the whale's belly, save Isaac from being sacrificed, when so near it, make dry bones to live and stand upon their feet, and cause a dry rod to bud, blossom, and bring forth almonds; then why should it be thought a thing incredible with any, that God should raise the dead? But,

*Secondly*, I now proceed to show, that the resurrection of the dead is not only credible, but *certain*; and this I shall do, partly from Scripture testimonies, and partly from other Scripture doctrines.

1st, From *Scripture testimonies*, which shall be taken both out of the Old and New Testament. I shall begin with producing testimonies out of the former; and,

1. With the words of God to Moses: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" Exod. iii. 6. I choose to mention this scripture, and to begin with it, because with this our Lord confronted the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and put them to silence; insomuch, that, after that, no man durst ask any question at all; the account of which you have in Mat. xxii. 23, and some following verses; and it stands thus: the Sadducees came to him with an instance of a woman, who had had seven husbands, who were brethren; and their question upon it is, whose wife she should be in the resurrection? To which Christ replies, having observed to them their ignorance of the Scriptures, and the power of God, that "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven;" and then adds, "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." But now here lies a difficulty, how this appears to be a proof of the resurrection of the dead.

Some have thought, that our Lord's design is to prove the immortality of the soul, which the Sadducees denied, as well as the resurrection of the dead; for they that deny the former, deny the latter; and some of the same arguments which prove the one, prove the other. Menasseh-ben-Israel, a learned Jew of the last century, produces this same passage of Scripture, to prove the immortality of the soul, and argues from it much in the same manner as Christ does. But it is certain, that our Lord produced this testimony as a proof of the resurrection. In

one of the evangelists, it is said, "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?" &c. Mat. xxii. 31. And in another, "Now, that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," &c. Luke xx. 37. Let it be observed, then, that it is not said, *I was*, or *I will be*, but *I am* the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; which is expressive not only of a covenant which had been made, but of one that abides and continues, which must be either the covenant of grace made with them in Christ, of which they had some glorious discoveries and manifestations, or some particular covenant respecting them and their posterity. As for the covenant of grace, this respected not their souls only, but their bodies also, even their whole persons; therefore, as their souls now live with God in the enjoyment of the promised good, it is necessary that their bodies should be raised from the dead, that, with their souls, they may enjoy the everlasting blessing of glory and happiness; otherwise, how would God's covenant be "an everlasting one, ordered in all things, and sure?" The learned Mr. Mede thinks, that Christ has respect to the covenant which God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in which he promised that he would give the land of Canaan to them, and to their posterity; not their posterity only, but to them also; therefore he observes, that it was necessary that they should be raised from the dead, that they, in their own persons, might enjoy the promised land. It must be acknowledged, that this is a way of arguing the Jews were used to, which may be the reason of the scribes being so well pleased with it; and therefore said, "Master, thou hast well said," Luke xx. 39. Such kind of arguments as these, to prove the resurrection of the dead, are now extant in their Talmud: for instance; R. Simai said, "From whence is the resurrection of the dead to be proved out of the law? from Exod. vi. 4, where it is said, *And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan*; it is not said to *you*, but to *them*." But, not to insist any longer on this proof, I proceed,

2. To another passage of Scripture, for the confirmation of this doctrine, which is in Job xix. 25—27, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." I shall not trouble you with the different versions of these words, some favouring, and some not, the doctrine of the resurrection: and it must be owned, that none of the Jewish writers understand the words of a real, but of a figurative or metaphorical resurrection, and suppose Job's meaning to be, that he should be delivered from the



afflicted state, in which he then was, and be restored to his former health, honour, and happiness; in which sense of the words they have been followed by some learned Christian interpreters, at which the Socinians very greedily catch. Temporal afflictions are, indeed, sometimes signified by death, and a deliverance out of them must be as life from the dead; but that this cannot be Job's sense and meaning here, may be concluded from the following hints. Job was so far from having any faith in, or assurance of his restoration to his former state of health, honour, and riches, that he had no hope, no expectation of it; nay, seems entirely to despair of it, though his friends endeavoured to support him with views of it, on condition of his repentance. He declares, Job vi. 11, and vii. 7, 8, and x. 20, and xvi. 22, and xvii. 1, 14—16, that he had no reason to hope for life, that he should quickly be gone, and therefore had made death familiar to him; that he did not expect to see any more temporal good; yea, in this very chapter, at the tenth verse, he says of God, "He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and mine hope hath he removed like a tree," and continues his doleful moan to the very words under consideration; so that it must seem unlikely, that, on a sudden, he should have his expectations of outward prosperity raised. No; the words are rather expressive of what was his inward support and comfort under present afflictions, and in the views of approaching death and the grave. They are an answer to what Bildad had said, in the preceding chapter, ver. 12—14, concerning the wicked man; where, though he may not directly mean Job, yet he had his eye upon him, when he says, "His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side. It shall devour the strength of his skin, even the first-born of death shall devour his strength. His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors." Well now, as if Job should say, supposing all this, yet this is my comfort, I know my interest in the living Redeemer, and am comfortably persuaded, that when he appears at the latter day, though this body of mine is now reduced to skin and bones, and will shortly be the repast of worms, yet it shall be raised again, and, in this very flesh of mine, shall I see God, and everlastingly enjoy him. The preface to the words shows, that it was something future, and at a great distance, which he had in view, even after the consumption of his own body, and at the appearance of his Redeemer in the latter day; and which was very considerable, and of moment; and therefore he says, "O! that my words were now written! O! that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!"—Besides, the vision of God with the eyes of his body, which he expected, is not suited to any state and condition in this life, but rather to the state of eternal glory and

happiness, when saints shall see him in the Mediator, as he is; nor can Job's words have reference to the vision he had of God, of which he speaks, chap. xlii. 6, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." Since that issued not barely in peace, joy, and comfort, but likewise, in conviction of his folly and weakness, in self-abhorrence, and deep humiliation.—Add to all this, that Job, in the close of this chapter, put his friends in mind of the awful judgment: "Be ye afraid of the sword; for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment;" between which and death, there must be a resurrection from the dead, of which he had before spoken, that so every one may come forth to judgment, and receive the things done in his body, whether they be good or evil.—From the whole, we may conclude, that Job here declares his faith, concerning the resurrection of the dead at the last day, and not his own restoration, from outward misery to outward happiness. An ancient writer once thought, that nothing could be a plainer proof of this doctrine: "for," says he, "no one, since Christ, speaks so plainly of the resurrection, as this man did before Christ."

3. Another testimony I shall produce for the proof of this doctrine, shall be Isa. xxvi. 19. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead." In ver. 14, the prophet says, "They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise;" the meaning of which words is, either that those tyrants, who formerly had dominion over the people of Israel were dead, and should not live any more in this world, or rise again, to tyrannize over them; or that many of the people were dead, or should die by the sword, famine, &c. and not live again; which the prophet mentions by way of complaint, and as the effect of unbelief, to which these words are an answer. The person speaking is the Messiah, to whom the characters given in ver. 4, 12, 13, belong; who assures the prophet, that though his men or people were dead, yet they should live again; that they should be raised again, either at the time of his resurrection or by virtue of it. The words are literally true of Christ's resurrection, and of ours by him,\* who, as he was to be born, and die, and rise again, in order to be the Saviour of his people, so many of them were to rise along with him; therefore he says, "With my dead body shall they arise;" which was fulfilled at the time of Christ's resurrection,† when *the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection.* Though these

\* See my book of the Prophecies of the Old Testament, &c. literally fulfilled in Jesus, p. 183.

† Mat. xxvii. 52, 53.

words may be rendered either thus, *As my dead body shall they arise*, i. e. in the same way and manner. Christ's resurrection is the exemplar of ours, *our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his*; he is *risen from the dead*,\* and become the *first-fruits of them that slept*; or, *as sure as my dead body shall they arise*. Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours; "because he lives, we shall live also."† "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." The expressions here made use of confirm this sense of the words, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs." To dwell in the dust, is expressive of the state of the dead; and a resurrection from thence is aptly signified by an awaking, since death is so frequently, in the sacred writings, compared to sleep.‡ The power of God, in raising the dead, is fitly expressed by the dew; for as through the virtue and influence of the dew, the grass and herbs of the field spring up and grow, so, through the wonderful power of God, "our bones," to use the prophet's phrase,|| "shall flourish like an herb," in the resurrection morn; and it is easy to observe a likeness between the last clause of this verse, "and the earth shall cast forth her dead;" and those expressions by which the resurrection is described in Rev. xx. 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it: and death and hell, (or the grave,) delivered up the dead which were in them." The Jews refer this prophecy to the resurrection of the dead. But,

4. To add no more testimonies of this kind, I shall conclude the evidence of this doctrine out of the Old Testament, from the famous prophecy in Daniel xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." These words are generally understood of the resurrection of the dead, as well by Jewish as Christian interpreters. Porphyry, the acute Heathen, and sworn enemy of Christianity, would have these words design the return of some of the people of the Jews to their own cities and habitations after Antiochus's generals were cut off, who before skulked about in holes and corners, and in which sense of the text he is followed by Grotius. But surely this deliverance, or the return of this people, was not in any of them to shame and contempt, especially to everlasting shame and contempt; nor was it to everlasting life in any of them, seeing they are all since dead. Nor is it true that the doctors of the Jewish church, from that time, shone as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars of heaven; but, on the contrary, their knowledge decreased, their

\* 1 Cor. xv. 20.

† John xiv. 19. 1 Thess. iv. 14.

‡ See Job vii. 21, and xvii. 16, and xx. 11, and xx. 16. Dan. xii. 2.

|| Isa. lxvi. 14.

light grew dim, and they became vain in their imaginations. On the other hand, the whole agrees with the resurrection of the dead, when, as our Lord says, whose words are the best comment on this text, "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, [*i. e.* the voice of Christ,] and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," John v. 28, 29; and when the bodies of the saints shall be raised in incorruption, power and glory, and "shall shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." I might have produced several other scriptures out of the Old Testament for the confirmation of this truth, such as Hosea vi. 2, and xiii. 14, &c. But I forbear, and pass on

To the New Testament. And here, were I to take the whole compass of proof which this will furnish out, I must transcribe a considerable part of it. I shall only observe, that this is the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; it is a doctrine which Christ himself taught; he declared himself to be "the resurrection and the life," or to be the author of the resurrection unto life; and that not only those whom the Father had given to him, should be raised by him, but that all that are in their graves, whether good or bad, should come forth from thence at his powerful and all-commanding voice. The same doctrine was taught by his apostles, who all jointly agree, that there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. The arguments of the apostle Paul for the confirmation of this doctrine, are by him laid together, in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. I do not take notice of particular passages in the New Testament, partly because they are plain and obvious proofs of this truth at first view, and partly because I shall have occasion to make particular use of them in some other parts of these discourses. I proceed,

2dly, To prove the certainty of the resurrection of the dead from *other Scripture truths and doctrines*, which I shall little more than name; and shall begin,

1. With the doctrine of *election*. That there is an eternal, personal election of some to everlasting life and salvation, the Scriptures do abundantly declare. Now, this act of election regards not their souls only, but their bodies also, even their whole persons: if then their persons, body and soul, are chosen in Christ to everlasting salvation, then their bodies must be raised from the dead, that they, united to their souls, may together "inherit the kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world;" otherwise the "purpose of God, according to election," will not stand; when, on the contrary, it is certain, that "his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure."

2. It is the doctrine of the Scriptures, that the same persons

who were *chosen in Christ*, before the foundation of the world, were *given to him* by the Father, were put into his hands, and made his care and charge. They were given to him not only to be his portion and inheritance, but to be kept, preserved, and saved by him, body and soul. This was the declared will of his Father, when he gave them to him, as he himself assures us: "And this is the Father's will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, (no, not even their dust,) but should raise it up again at the last day; and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day," John vi. 39, 40. Now, if these bodies of the saints, which are given to Christ, should not be raised from the dead, the Father's will would not be fulfilled, nor Christ discharge the trust reposed in him.

3. This truth may be concluded from the *redemption of our bodies*, as well as of our souls, by the blood of Christ. It is true, this is sometimes called *the redemption of the soul, and the salvation of the soul*, but not to the exclusion of the body; for that is bought with the same price the soul is. Hence the apostle says to the saints after this manner: "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," 1 Cor. vi. 20. Now, if these bodies, which Christ has bought, should not be raised from the dead, he would lose part of his purchase: nor could he perfectly "see the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

4. This doctrine may be inferred from the *union* of the saints to Christ, body and soul. Their whole persons are united to him; "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that your bodies are the members of Christ?" ver. 15. They are part of his mystical body, they are united to him, as well as their souls, and remain in union with him after death; for, as the union of the two natures in Christ was not dissolved, when his soul and body were at death disunited, so neither is the union between Christ and his people dissolved at death: and, by virtue of this union, their bodies shall be raised from the dead; otherwise Christ must lose a constituent part of those who are his mystical body, and so the church not be "the fullness of him that filleth all in all," as she is said to be, Eph. i. 23.

5. All those who are chosen in Christ, who are given to him, who are redeemed by him, and are in union with him, are *sanctified* by the Spirit of God, and that not in their souls only, but in their bodies also; for as the body, as well as the soul, is defiled by sin, it also stands in need of the sanctifying influences of divine grace. Accordingly the Spirit takes up his dwelling in the bodies, as well as in the souls of men; "What! know ye not," says the apostle, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" 1 Cor. vi. 19. He be-

gins and carries on the work of sanctification in the one, as well as in the other, as is needful; and will, at last, completely finish it; for which the apostle prays, saying, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. v. 23. Now, if the bodies of these sanctified ones are not raised, the Spirit of God will not only lose that which he has taken possession of, as his dwelling-place, but also a considerable part of his glory, as a Sanctifier.

6. It will not be improper to take notice of the *translations* of *Enoch* and *Elias* to heaven, who were taken up thither, soul and body; nor of the saints, who came out of their graves, after our Lord's resurrection, and went with him to glory, as is very probable; nor of those who shall be alive at Christ's second coming, who shall not die, but be changed, and be caught up with the rest of the saints in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. Now, whereas it is certain, that there are some saints already in heaven with their bodies, and others that will be, it is very improbable that the rest should be without, or that there should be this difference among the spirits of just men made perfect, that some should have their bodies united to them, and others not.

7. Nothing is more certain than that there will be a *general judgment*. "God has appointed the day in which," and ordained the Person by whom, "he will judge the world in righteousness," when all, both great and small, shall stand before God, and the dead shall be judged according to their works. Now, in order to this, the resurrection of them is absolutely necessary, that they may "receive the things done in their body, whether good or bad."

8. Neither the *happiness of the righteous* will be complete, nor the *misery of the wicked* be proportionate to their crimes, until the resurrection. The *happiness* of the saints will not be complete: hence they are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body," Rom. viii. 23, when that being redeemed from the grave, and united to the soul, shall, with it, enter into the joy of the Lord. Nor will the *misery* of the wicked be proportionate to their crimes till then, when they shall be cast, body and soul, into hell; and as the one deserves it, as well as the other, it is proper that so it should be.

9. There will be need of, and uses for *bodily organs*, or for some of the members of the body in heaven; as particularly the eye, the ear, and tongue. There will be the glorified body of Christ, or the glorious Mediator in human nature, for the saints to look upon with unutterable pleasure: it will be a considerable part of their happiness to "see him as he is." This is one reason why Christ would have his people with him where he

is, namely, that "they may behold his glory," even this, as well as other branches of it; and it was Job's support under his afflictions, that in his "flesh he should see God;" that is, the God-man and Mediator, or "God manifest in the flesh." There will be songs of everlasting joy and praise sung in such melodious strains, as will delight the ear, and employ the tongue throughout the endless ages of eternity.

10. And lastly, and which is the apostle Paul's grand and principal argument for the resurrection of the dead, and which he uses with so much strength, and improves to so good a purpose, is the resurrection of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, which you have at large in 1 Cor. xv., where he thus argues: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if the dead rise not: for if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins; then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." The saints may comfortably conclude their resurrection from Christ's; for if the head be raised, the members shall: "Every man in his own order, Christ the first fruits; afterward, they that are Christ's, at his coming." Job was satisfied that he should rise again, because his Redeemer lived, and would appear at the latter day upon the earth; and the saints may be assured, that because "Christ lives, they shall live also." Other arguments might have been made use of; but as they will also prove that the same body shall be raised again, I shall therefore reserve them for their proper place.

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## SERMON II.

ACTS xxvi. 8.—Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

HAVING, in my former discourse, proved both the credibility and certainty of the resurrection of the dead, I shall now proceed,

III. To inquire *who they are*, and *what that is*, which shall be raised. This head of inquiry consists of two parts, and regards both the persons who, and what of those persons it is, which shall be the subject of the resurrection; and in this order I shall consider it.

1st. I shall inquire *who* they are which shall be raised from the dead. I shall not take notice of the Mahometan notion, that angels and brutes shall rise, since the former die not, and therefore cannot be said to be raised from the dead; and the spirit of the latter goeth downward to the earth, never to return more. Only men shall rise from the dead, but not all of them; for though "it is appointed unto men once to die," yet not unto all men: all men shall not die; some will be alive, and others dead, at the appearing of Christ to judge the world; when they that are alive shall, indeed, be changed from a state of mortality, to a state of immortality, but cannot be said to rise from the dead, because they die not. But then all the dead shall be raised; all that are in their graves shall come forth, whether these graves be in the earth or sea, and whether the persons be righteous or wicked. This was the generally received opinion of the Jews of old; but since, many of their greatest masters have departed from it, as in Isa. xxvi. 14, 19, and xxxviii. 18, and Dan. xii. 2, who not only exclude the Gentiles in general, but all wicked and ungodly persons whatever from having any part in the resurrection. In this they have been followed by the Socinians, though they care not to speak out their minds fully; and the Remonstrants have shown a very good liking of the same notion. I shall a little consider this, seeing the greater part of the testimonies and arguments produced in my former discourse, chiefly relate to the resurrection of the just. That the wicked shall rise, as well as the righteous, may be proved,

1. From express *texts of Scripture*. The prophet Daniel says, "That some of them who sleep in the dust of the earth, [i. e. who are dead,] shall awake, [i. e. rise again,] to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii. 2; who must be the wicked, since it will never be the case of the righteous, who will awake, or rise, to everlasting life. Our Lord Jesus Christ assures us, that "they that have done evil, shall come forth to the resurrection of damnation," John v. 29, in which words he does, at once, describe the character of the wicked, asserts their resurrection, and fixes the end of it. The apostle Paul gives a full testimony to this truth, when he affirms, "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust," Acts xxiv. 15.

2. This doctrine may be evinced from the *justice* of God, which requires, that they who have sinned in the body, should be also punished in the body. The body is the seat of sin, as well as the soul, nor is any part free from it: if the tongue, which is but "a little member, is a world of iniquity," James iii. 5, 6, as the apostle James says it is, what a world of iniquity must be in the whole body? And, indeed, there are but few sins but what are committed in or by the body. It may be con-



sidered not only as accessary to sin, but as a partner with the soul in sinning, and as an instrument by which it is committed; and, in either respect, is deserving of punishment. Now, it is certain, that, in this life, the wicked do not receive in their bodies the full reward of punishment, since they have not greater afflictions than the righteous; nay, it is observed of them, that "they are not in trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued like other men," Psal. lxxiii. 5, wherefore it seems necessary, from the justice of God, that the bodies of the wicked should be raised, that they, with their souls, may receive the full and just recompense of reward.

3. That the wicked shall rise from the dead, may be concluded from the *general judgment*, when "the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and be judged according to their works," Rev. xx. 12, 15, when "whosoever is not found written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake of fire;" which can be understood of no other than the wicked; and if all men must "appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. v. 10, then must the wicked appear, that they may receive according to the bad things which they have done in their bodies; in order to which appearance before the judgment-seat, and to the reception of their evil things, there must be a resurrection of them from the dead.

4. The account which the Scriptures give of the *punishment* and *torments* of the wicked, and also the *effects* thereof, manifestly supposes a resurrection of their bodies: how will every eye see Christ when he appears, and all the kindreds of the earth wail because of him? why is the place of torment signified by a furnace and lake of fire, and by outer darkness, where will be weeping and gnashing of teeth? wherefore do the Scriptures speak of being cast into hell fire, with two eyes, or two hands, or two feet, if there will be no resurrection of the wicked? If it should be said, that these expressions are either metaphorical or proverbial, there must be something literally true, to which they refer, and which is the foundation of them: besides, our Lord expressly exhorts his disciples to "fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Mat. x. 28.

5. This notion, that the wicked rise not, must have a tendency to *licentiousness*, and open a door to all manner of sin, and take off all restraints from wicked persons, and embolden them in their vicious course of life; for what the apostle says of the resurrection in general; may be said of this, "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," 1 Cor. xv. 32. But from these several hints, it may be strongly concluded, that there will be a resurrection of the wicked, as well as of the righteous.

Indeed, there will be a difference between the resurrection of the just, and the resurrection of the unjust, in many respects: there will be a difference in the time of the one and the other; the dead in Christ shall rise first; "the upright shall have the dominion over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection;" wherefore "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." And as they shall not rise at the same time, so neither altogether by the same means: they shall, indeed, be both raised by Christ; for "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth," John v. 28, 29. The saints will be raised by virtue of their union to Christ; "because he lives, they shall live also;" but the wicked will be raised merely by the power of Christ, in order to appear before him, and be judged by him, who is Lord of all. Moreover, though the bodies of the wicked will be raised immortal, and in such a state as to continue under perpetual punishment, yet they will not be free from sin, nor clothed with glory; whereas the bodies of the saints will not only be raised immortal and incorruptible, but powerful, spiritual, and glorious; yea, will be fashioned like to Christ's glorious body. In fine, the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked will differ in their end; "the righteous will rise to everlasting life, the wicked to everlasting shame and contempt." Hence the resurrection of the one is called "the resurrection of life;" and the resurrection of the other, "the resurrection of damnation." But now let us attend to the arguments and objections advanced against the resurrection of the wicked, which are taken partly from Scripture, and partly from reason.

(1.) From some passages of Scripture; and the first that is objected is, Psal. i. 5: "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." From hence some Jewish writers have concluded, that there will be no resurrection of the wicked, their souls perishing with their bodies at death. This notion may seem to be favoured by the versions of the Septuagint and Vulgate, with some others, who read the words thus: "Therefore the ungodly shall not rise again in judgment." But supposing, and not granting, that these versions may be agreeable to the Hebrew text, it will not follow, from hence, that the wicked shall not rise again; for it is not said absolutely, that "they shall not rise again," but that "they shall not rise again in JUDGMENT;" that is, so as to appear in the congregation of the righteous at the day of judgment, when the righteous and the wicked will be separated, the one placed at Christ's right hand, and the other at his left; they will not rise when the righteous do; for "the dead in Christ shall rise first:" the wicked, though they will rise again, yet not in the first resurrection, or in the resurrection of life, but in the resurrection of damnation. Moreover, the

word here used does not intend the *resurrection of the wicked*, but their standing before God in a *judicial sense* when raised; and the meaning is, that they will not be able to stand, when the righteous Judge appears, with any degree of confidence, so as not to be ashamed, as the righteous will; but, being filled with confusion and horror of mind, will not be able to lift up their heads, or open their mouth to justify themselves, or vindicate their cause, and so consequently must fall, and not stand, in judgment.

Another scripture, which may seem to countenance this notion, that the wicked shall not rise from the dead, is Isa. xxvi. 14: "They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise." But these words, as I have observed in my former discourse, are either to be understood of the people of Israel, and are expressive of the prophet's complaint of their present state, that they were dead, and of his distrust of their future resurrection, to which he has an answer returned in ver. 19: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise;" or they are to be understood of those wicked lords, who had formerly had the dominion over these people, but were now dead, and should not live again on this earth, or rise again to tyrannize over them: and, if we consider the words in either sense, they cannot support an argument against the resurrection of the wicked.

The words of the prophet Daniel, "And many of them who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," Dan. xii. 2, though they are a plain and full proof of the resurrection of the wicked, as well as of the righteous, yet are made use of by some Jewish writers against it. It is observed, that the prophet does not say that *all* of them, but *many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; yea, it is said, that these *many* design only a *few*, and these the righteous, among the children of Israel. In answer to which, let it be observed, that the word *many* may be understood universally of all that sleep in the dust of the earth; in which sense the word is used in Psal. xcvi. 1: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitudes of isles be glad thereof;" in the Hebrew text it is, *let many isles*, i. e. let all the isles be glad thereof. Or it may be considered in a comparative sense, thus: they that sleep in the dust of the earth, and shall awake, are many in comparison of those few who will be alive and remain, when the dead are to be raised; for there will be some, though but a few, when compared with others, who shall not die, but be changed: or rather the words may be taken distributively after this manner; of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, many shall awake to everlasting life, and many to everlasting shame and contempt; which is just such a division of them, who are to be raised from

the dead, as is given by our Lord, when he says, "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation," John v. 29. *Many* can never design a *few* only, as it must, if only the Israelites, who were the fewest of all people, and the righteous among them, are the subjects of the resurrection: yea, if the righteous only of all nations should be raised, they are but a few in comparison of others. Besides, the prophet says, that "some shall awake to everlasting shame," which cannot be said of the righteous, but must design the wicked: therefore this prophecy is so far from being an argument against it, that it furnishes us with a very considerable one for the resurrection of the wicked.

There are some other passages of Scripture, besides these, which are made use of by another set of men against this truth; as Eccl. vii. 10: "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth." Now, say they, if the wicked rise again, the day of their death must be worse than the day of their birth. To which it may be answered, that the wise man is not speaking of the wicked or reprobate, of whom it may be said, in some sense, that it would have been better if they had never been born, or had died immediately, rather than have lived to aggravate their condemnation by repeated iniquities, and with whom it certainly will be much worse after death, than now it is. The words respect the righteous, who are blessed in their death; for they die in the Lord, and rest from their labours, are free from sin and sorrow of every kind, and are with Christ, which is far better than to come into and be in this troublesome world.

Likewise the words of the apostle Paul, in 1 Thess. iv. 16: "And the dead in Christ shall rise first," are urged against the resurrection of the wicked; from whence it is observed, that those who rise again, are such who are "dead in Christ," and that these only are believers; and therefore the wicked shall not rise. To which it may be replied, that the apostle is indeed speaking of the resurrection of the saints, and not of the wicked, though not to the exclusion of their resurrection. It is certain that they are only believers who are dead in Christ; but then it is neither here, nor elsewhere said, that only believers, or that only such who die in Christ, shall rise; yea, besides, the apostle says, "that the dead in Christ shall rise first," which supposes that the wicked shall rise afterwards; for it would be an impropriety to say, that the dead in Christ shall rise first, if those who are not dead in Christ do not rise afterwards; a first resurrection supposes a second.

I shall now proceed to consider the arguments and objections formed against the resurrection of the wicked, which are taken,

(2.) From *reason*. It is said that God is very merciful, and therefore if he will not eternally save the wicked, yet it is not reasonable to suppose that he will raise them from the dead merely to torment them; it will be sufficient that they do not enjoy the happiness of the saints in heaven. To which I answer: it is true, that God is very merciful, yet "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy." Though mercy is natural and essential to him, yet the blessed fruits and effects of it, as enjoyed by his creatures, are limited by, and dependent upon his sovereign will and pleasure; there are some of his creatures, of whom it is said, "He that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will show them no favour," Isa. xxvii. 11. Besides, it ought to be observed, that God is a righteous God, as well as merciful, and that one perfection of his is not to be set against another; though he is merciful, and delights in mercy, yet he is also "the Judge of all the earth, who will do right." I have before proved, that it is necessary, from the justice of God, that the bodies of the wicked should be raised, not merely to be tormented, but that God may glorify his righteousness in their just punishment.

It is also argued, that Christ is the meritorious cause of the resurrection; and therefore the wicked, or reprobate, shall not rise again, because "Christ has merited nothing for them." To which I reply, the resurrection may be distinguished, as it is by Christ, into a resurrection of life, and a resurrection of damnation; that Christ is the meritorious cause of the former, but not of the latter. Christ is not only the exemplar, but the efficient and meritorious cause of the saints' resurrection; "he is the first-fruits of them that sleep; every one rises in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." They that are Christ's, rise by virtue of their union to him, and through the power of his resurrection; not so the wicked; they shall, indeed, be raised by Christ, but not by virtue of his death and resurrection, or through any merit of his, but by his almighty power; their resurrection will not be the effect of his merit, as Mediator, but of his divine power, as Lord of the dead and living.

It is further urged, that the wicked die an eternal death, and therefore do not rise from the dead; for, say they, it implies a contradiction to say that they die an eternal death, and yet are raised from the dead. To which it may be answered, that there is a twofold death, a temporal and an eternal one. Temporal death is a separation of the soul from the body, and is what may be called the *first* death. Eternal death is a separation of body and soul from God, and a casting of both into hell, which is what the Scripture calls the *second* death. Now, this second or eternal death is consistent with the resurrection of the body; nay, the resurrection of the body is requisite unto it. If

it should be said, as it is, that corporeal death is the punishment of sin, that punishment is not taken away in the wicked, and therefore corporeal death perpetually continues, and consequently there is no resurrection of the wicked from the dead. I answer, it is true that corporeal death is one part of the punishment of sin, was at first threatened against it by God, and is inflicted on the wicked, as the just wages of it. It is true also that the punishment of sin is perpetual, and is not removed, or taken away from the wicked; nor is it by the resurrection of the wicked, for their bodies will be raised by the power of God, in such a state and condition, as to bear eternal punishment, which shall be inflicted upon them, and which they shall endure both in soul and body.

It is scarcely worthy of notice what is objected by some against an universal resurrection, that the earth will not be sufficient to contain all. This objection may be startling to such as suppose that all men, righteous and wicked, when raised, will be gathered together into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and be there judged; for if the whole earth cannot contain them, how should that valley? If it could be thought that there is any difficulty in the objection, it might be, in some measure, removed, by observing, that whereas "the dead in Christ shall rise first, they, with them that will be found alive, will be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and shall be for ever with him;" so that the earth will be left to the wicked, and, it is to be hoped, it may be allowed there will be room enough for them. From the whole, notwithstanding all these objections, it may be strongly concluded, that there will be a general resurrection of all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, of all the wicked, and of all the righteous, in all nations. I now proceed,

*2dly.* To inquire what that *is* of man which shall be raised from the dead. Man consists of soul and body; it is not the soul, but the body, which is raised: not the soul, for the soul dies not, and therefore cannot be said to be raised from the dead; nor does it sleep with the body in the grave, and therefore needs no awakening, nor will it be awakened when the body is.

[1.] It *dies* not, and therefore cannot be said to rise from the dead. There were some Christians in Arabia who held that the soul died with the body, and, at the resurrection, revived and returned to its own body; but it is an immaterial and immortal substance, which never dies. I do not propose to give you an elaborate discourse on this subject, and go through the argument of the soul's immortality; this would require greater abilities than I am master of, and a larger compass than is allowed me for my subject. I shall just mention two or three

things upon this head, in proof of the soul's immortality; which may be taken,

1. From the *nature* of the soul itself. It is of the same nature with angels, who are immaterial and incorporeal spirits, and so not subject to corruption and death; they die not: yea, the soul of man has a likeness to God; it bears a resemblance to the divine nature. The image of God in man chiefly and principally consists in the soul; it is of God's immediate creation; it comes from him and is the very breath of him. If we consider its several powers and faculties, especially the understanding and will, we may well conclude it to be an immortal and never-dying substance. The mind or understanding not only apprehends and perceives things corporeal, temporal, and corruptible, but also such things as are immaterial, incorporeal, eternal, and incorruptible; such as angels, yea, God himself, which it could not do, was it not itself an immaterial, incorporeal, and immortal substance. It is capable of considering an endless eternity, though it is easy to observe the difference there is in the mind or understanding of man, with respect to that eternity, which preceded the creation of the world, and that which is to come; when it considers the former, it is quickly overwhelmed, it flutters and hangs its wing, and is obliged to descend: but when it fixes its thoughts upon the latter, how readily does it apprehend how it shall proceed without end; and with what pleasure does it roll over the millions of ages in it! The reason of this difference is, because it is not from eternity, and has a beginning, but will continue to eternity, and have no end. And, besides that large stock of knowledge of various things, which men of the greatest understandings are furnished with, there is a natural and continual desire of knowing more, which will never be satisfied in this life; and this was one of the chief arguments Socrates used when in prison, to prove to his scholars the immortality of the soul, for this desire is not implanted in vain: the soul therefore must remain after death, when it will arrive to a more perfect knowledge of things. The will has for its object universal good; and especially God, who is the chief good, which it desires to enjoy for ever: its actions are free, and cannot be forced by any creature; no creature has a power over it, to force it or destroy it; it acts independently of the body, in willing and nilling, choosing and refusing; it uses no corporeal organ: yea, when the body is sick and infirm, and ready to die, the will is then active and vigorous, and shows itself to be so, either by a willingness or unwillingness to die; nay, generally speaking, the more severe affliction is, and the nearer the approach of death, the more active is the will to be freed from agonies and pains, either by a restoration to health, or by a removal by death; which shows that the soul does not

sicken and grow languid, as the body does, nor dies with it. The soul is a pure unmixed and simple substance: it is not composed of matter and form; nor is it a material form, educed out of the power of matter, as the souls of brutes, but is altogether spiritual and immaterial; it is not of a body made up of the four elements, fire, water, earth, and air, which is capable of being resolved into them again, as our bodies are; it has nothing contrary to itself, which can be destructive of it; it is neither hot nor cold, moist or dry, hard or tender: it is not as an accident in a subject, which, when the subject is destroyed, is destroyed with it; if it has any subject on which it depends, it must be the body; but it is so far from being dependent on the body, and perishing with it, that, on the contrary, when the soul departs, the body perishes. The soul has no other cause of its being but God; on him it depends, and by him it is preserved. He, indeed, could, if he would, annihilate, or reduce it to nothing; but, since it is evident he will not, we may conclude it is immortal, and will never die.

2. The immortality of the soul may be proved from the *law of nature*, the religion of mankind, the consciousness of sinful actions, and the fears and terrors of mind arising from thence, and also from the justice of God. "The consent of all nations," Cicero says, "is to be reckoned the law of nature;" and according to him, it is "the agreement of all nations, that the soul remains after death, and is immortal." This, in general, may be true, and deserves notice, and is no inconsiderable proof of the soul's immortality; but it must be owned, that there are many exceptions to it: some, even of the philosophers denied it, and others of them, who gave into it, spoke very doubtfully and confusedly of it, and delivered their sentiments about it, to use the words of Minutius Felix, *corrupta et dimidiata fide*, with a corrupt and divided faith, as though they did but half believe it.

The immortality of the soul, is no doubt, discoverable by the light of nature, and was originally the belief of men; but as this light became dim by sin, and as men departed from the true religion, and went further off from the professors of it, so they became vainer in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened, and lost not only the knowledge of this, but many other truths. Thales the Milesian is said to be the first who taught it; though others say, that Pherecydes the Scyrian was the first who asserted it. Some ascribe it to the Chaldeans and Indian Magi, and others to the Egyptians, as the first authors of it, who, perhaps, received it from the posterity of Abraham the Chaldean, who dwelt among them. However, it is certain, that there is in man a natural desire after immortality, which is not in any but immortal creatures; as it is also natural to him to be religious, hence some have chosen rather to define



man a religious than a rational animal: all nations profess some religion, and keep up some kind of religious worship; the most blind and ignorant, barbarous and savage, are not without it. Now, to what purpose is their religion? and why do they worship a deity, if there is no future state? If the soul remains not after death, but at death perishes with the body, they need not be solicitous about the worship of God, and the performance of religious exercises, but say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die;" nor be diligent in the exercise of virtue, or be concerned at the commission of sin. But, on the other hand, it is evident that there is a consciousness of sin in men, or there is in men a "conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another." There are dreadful horrors, terrors, and stings of conscience, which wicked men are, at times, attended with; they are seized with such dread and trembling, with such panic fears, they cannot get rid of.

If these, as some say, were the *effects of education*, it is strange that they should be so general and extensive as they are, and more strange that none have been able to shake them off entirely; and stranger still, that those who have run the greatest lengths in infidelity and atheism, should not be able to free themselves from them. Hobbes, that bold advocate for infidelity, who endeavoured to harden himself and others, in the disbelief of a future state, would be very uneasy, if, at any time, he was alone in the dark. These things not only show that there is a divine Being, to whom men are accountable for their actions, but that there is a future state after death, in which men shall live, either in happiness or in misery. And, indeed, this is necessary from the justice of God, who is the Judge of all the earth, and will do right, in regarding the good, and punishing the wicked. It is easy to observe, that in this life, good men are afflicted, and the wicked prosper: there are innumerable instances of this kind; the veracity, justice, and faithfulness of God are not so manifestly seen in bestowing favours and blessings upon good men, according to his promises, and in punishing wicked men, according to his threatenings; it seems reasonable then to suppose, that the souls of men are immortal, that their bodies shall be raised from the dead, and that there will be a future state, in which good men shall be happy, and wicked men miserable.

3. The soul's immortality may be proved from the *Scriptures*, which expressly declare that the body may be killed, the soul cannot; Mat. x. 28, Eccl. xii. 7; and that when "the dust shall return to the earth, as it was, the Spirit shall return to God that gave it." It may be concluded, from all those scriptures, Isa. lv. 3; Mat. xxii. 32; John vi. 40, 47, which speak of an everlasting covenant which God has made with his people, "for God is not

the God of the dead, but of the living;" and from all the promises of everlasting life, which he has made unto them; as also from the account it gives of the eager desires of the saints after future happiness, Phil. i. 23. 2 Cor. v. 6, 8, and of their assurance of enjoying it upon their dissolution, as well as from their particular commendation of their souls, Psal. xlix. 15, Acts vii. 59, Luke xxii. 46, or spirits, into the hands of God at death, recorded in these writings. And, to add no more, we may be fully satisfied, by the sacred oracles, Luke xvi. 22, 23. Rev. vi. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 19. that the souls of men, immediately upon the dissolution of their bodies, enter upon a state either of happiness or misery; all which proves the permanency of the soul after death, its separate existence, its future state or condition, either of pleasure or pain. From the whole it follows, that if the soul dies not, it cannot be said to be raised from the dead, or be the subject of the resurrection.

[2.] The soul *sleeps* not with the body until the resurrection, and therefore needs no awakening, and cannot be said to be raised or awakened when the body is. The Socinians, and some of the Arminians say, that the soul, after death, is in a deep sleep, is insensible of happiness or misery, and destitute of all sense and operation. For the confutation of which sleepy notion, let the following things be considered:

1. That sleep belongs to the *body*, and not to the soul.

2. When the body is asleep, the *soul* is *awake* and *active*, as is evident in abundance of instances from dreams and visions of the night: when deep sleep falleth upon man, the soul understands and perceives, devises and contrives, reasons and discourses, chooses and refuses, grieves and rejoices, hopes and fears, loves and hates, and the like. Of like nature are ecstasies and raptures, when the body lies, as it were, dead, senseless, and void of motion: such was the apostle's case, when he says, "He knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body," 2 Cor. xii. 4, 5, and yet his soul was capable of receiving divine things, of seeing such sights, and hearing such words, which was neither lawful nor possible for him to express.

3. The soul being freed from the body, must be more *active* than when in it, especially as it is corrupted with sin, whereby it becomes a clog and an incumbrance to it, and a weight about it, so that it cannot, as it would, perform spiritual duties; "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak:" but now, when it is freed from the body, and joined to the spirits of just men made perfect, it must be more capable of serving God with spiritual joy and pleasure.

4. The soul separate from the body is most like to the *angels*, and its state, condition, and employment, much resemble theirs; now, nothing is more foreign to angels than sleep and inactivity, who always behold the face of God, stand ready to do his com-

mandments, hearkening to the voice of his word; and no sooner do they receive orders from him, but they do his pleasure; they are continually before the throne of God, praising his name, celebrating the divine perfections, and "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

5. If the souls of believers were, after death, to remain in a state of insensibility and inactivity, then the case of *departed saints* would be much worse than that of the living; for though the saints are now disturbed with a wicked and unbelieving heart, afflicted with Satan's temptations, and exercised with a variety of sorrows, yet at times they have communion with God through Christ, the discoveries of his love to their souls, the light of his countenance, and the comforts of his Spirit; they have the word and ordinances to refresh and support them, and are employed in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; all which is both edifying and delightful to them, and which saints departed are deprived of, if this is their case, that their souls sleep with their bodies until the resurrection: If this be true, it would have been much better for the apostle Paul, and I am sure, more to the advantage of the churches of Christ, if he had continued upon earth to this day, than to be sleeping in his grave, senseless and inactive. Certainly this great man knew nothing of this when he said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain: but if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you," Phil. i. 21—24. Had the apostle known that he must have remained in a state of inactivity and uselessness, deprived of the communion of Christ and his church, it would have been no difficulty with him to determine which was most eligible, to live or die; nor can it be imagined, that the desires of any of the saints would be so strong after a dissolution, as they sometimes are, when they say, we are "willing rather to be absent from the body," if they did not believe that they should be immediately "present with the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 8. This notion, then, makes the condition of saints departed worse than that of the living, whereas the wise man says, "I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive," Eccl. iv. 2: the reason is, because "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," Rev. xiv. 13. As soon as dead, they enter upon a state of happiness and joy, and are employed in praising God, and singing the Lamb's new song.

6. This notion is *contrary* to many places of Scripture, Eccl. xii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 1, 8, which assure us, that the soul after death

returns to God that gave it, has a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, into which it is received, when dislodged from the earthly house of its tabernacle, where it is present with the Lord, enjoying uninterrupted communion with him, "in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore." This was what Christ promised the thief upon the cross, when he said to him, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise," Luke xxiii. 43, which would not have been true, if his soul slept with his body until the resurrection. The apostle John says, that he "saw under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," Rev. vi. 9, 10, and we may be assured, that these souls were not asleep; for of them he says, "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

The advocates for soul-sleeping, make use of several passages of Scripture to support their opinion; particularly such as speak of persons sleeping when they die, of which there are many instances, as 2 Sam. vii. 12. 1 Kings i. 21. Job vii. 21. Dan. xii. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 18. 1 Thess. iv. 14. John xi. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xv. 51. This is a way of speaking which was much used in the eastern countries, and is expressive of the death of the body and its lying in the grave, because sleep is the image of death; so to sleep with the fathers, is to die as they did, and be buried where they were; and to sleep in the dust, or in the dust of the earth, or in the grave, is to die, be buried, and lie there, which can be understood of the body only, and not the soul. When we read of any who fell asleep in Christ, or that sleep in Jesus, the meaning is, that they died in the Lord. When Christ said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth," he meant that he was dead; and when the apostle Paul says, "We shall not all sleep," he designs nothing else than that we shall not all die, for those who are alive at Christ's coming, will be changed. If this mode of expression, and the scriptural instances of it, prove any thing in this controversy, they prove too much; for if they prove that the soul sleeps with the body, they prove that the soul dies with it, since by sleep is meant no other than death.

Again, they urge all those scriptures in favour of their notion, as Mat. xiii. 40, 41, 49, 50, and xxv. 46. Luke xiv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 8, which represent the happiness of the saints, and the misery of the wicked, as not taking place until the last day, the end of the world, the resurrection of the just, and the day of judgment, when the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous unto life eternal; and therefore, during that time, their souls must be asleep. To which it may be replied, that there is a twofold state of the righteous and the wicked, after death, re-

specting their happiness and misery; the one is inchoate, or but begun; the other is full, consummate and perfect. Now, it is of the latter that these scriptures speak, but not of the former; and it is allowed that the righteous will not be in the full possession of glory until the last day, when their bodies will be raised and united to their souls, and both together enter into the full joy of their Lord; nor will the wicked receive the full measure of their punishment until the judgment is over, when both soul and body shall be cast into hell. But then immediately upon death they both enter on a state of happiness or misery; the righteous, as soon as they are absent from the body, are present with the Lord; and the wicked are no sooner dead, but in hell they lift up their eyes.

Again, they endeavour to improve all those scriptures to their advantage, as Psal. xxx. 9, and lxxxviii. 10—12, and cxv. 17, 18; Isa. xxxviii. 18, which describe men, after death, as incapable of praising God; such as these, "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth? Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence; for the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee. They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." From which it is inferred, that if the souls of the saints, after death, are not employed in praising God, they must be asleep, or be destitute of sense and operation; for what work else can they be employed in? To this it may be answered, that though the saints, whilst their bodies are in their graves, and before the resurrection, do not, and cannot praise God in and with their bodies, of which only these scriptures can be supposed to speak; since nothing but the body goes down into the pit, or is laid in the grave, yet their souls may and do praise God, in like manner as the angels do; with whom, in the book of the Revelation, they are sometimes joined and represented as with them, "glorifying God, praising his name, singing hallelujahs, and ascribing salvation to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever," Rev. v. 11—13, and vii. 9—12. Likewise, though the saints, after death, do not praise God before men, and in the midst of his church militant, as they did when in the land of the living, to which these passages of Scripture refer; yet they may, and do praise him before the angels, and in the midst of the church triumphant; so that, from hence, there is no reason to conclude that the souls of believers, after death, till the resurrection, are in a state of inactivity, or sleep with their

bodies. Therefore, seeing the soul sleeps not, it is not what will be awakened at the resurrection, or be the subject of it. I go on,

To prove that it is the *body*, which dies, that shall be raised. This is not annihilated, or reduced to nothing by death; it is not a new, airy, ethereal or celestial body, which shall be united to the soul at the resurrection, but it will be the same numerical body, which dies, that shall be raised again; all which I hope to make appear, in the following part of my discourse.

1st, The body is not *annihilated*, or reduced to nothing by death. This is asserted by Socinus and his followers, but is contrary both to reason and Scripture. The body is not made out of nothing, nor will it be reduced to nothing; it consists of the four elements, and will be resolved into the same; and though it may, after death, pass under many changes and alterations, yet the matter and substance will always remain in some form, and in some place or another. Death is a separation, or a disunion of soul and body, but not an annihilation of either; by death the whole compound is dissolved, but neither part of it is reduced to nothing; the dust, or the body, which is of the dust, returns to the earth, as it was, and the soul or spirit to God, that gave it. Death is sometimes expressed by *returning to the dust*; but to return to the dust, and be reduced to nothing, are two different things, unless it can be thought that dust is nothing. It is sometimes signified by *seeing corruption*; but corruption is one thing, and annihilation another; corruption supposes the thing in being, which is corrupted, annihilation takes away the being of it; notwithstanding corruption, the matter and substance may remain, though the form and quality may be altered, but annihilation leaves nothing. Death is sometimes figuratively expressed by *sowing seed in the earth* and its rotting and corrupting there, by *pulling down a house*, and *putting off a tabernacle*. Now, though the seed sown in the earth dies, corrupts, and rots, yet it is not reduced to nothing; it neither loses its being, nor its nature, but in due time being quickened, buds and puts forth its seminal virtue; a house may be pulled down, and a tabernacle unpinned, and the several parts be separated one from another, and yet the matter and substance of them all remain and continue. If the body is annihilated by death, Christ will lose that which is a part of his purchase, and what is united to him, and the Spirit his dwelling place; for Christ has bought the bodies of his people, as well as their souls, and which, with their souls, are the members of him, and in which the Spirit of God dwells, as in his temple. Besides, if the body was reduced to nothing by death, the resurrection of the body would not be properly a resurrection, but a creation of a new body; and, indeed, this notion of annihilation is designed to make way for

the introduction of that, the truth of which I shall presently examine.

As for those scriptures which speak of the dead as though they were not; as when Rachel is represented weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, "because they were not," Jer. xxxi. 15, the meaning is not, that they no where existed, had no being, or were reduced to nothing, but they were not in the land of the living, existing among men, and conversing with them; seeing it is said of Enoch, that "he was not, for God took him," Gen. v. 24; though he was not on earth, yet he was in heaven with God; his body was not annihilated, but he was taken up, soul and body, to heaven. When the apostle says: "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them," 1 Cor. vi. 13; he does not design a destruction of the substance of the body, or of any part of it, but respects the use of it, which shall be no more employed in receiving meats, to supply the natural wants of the body, though it will be necessary in the resurrection, as a constituent part of the body, and for the beauty of it.

2dly, It is not a *new ærial, celestial* body, or a *spiritual* body, as to nature and substance, which shall be united to the soul at the resurrection. It is allowed that the body will be different from what it now is, as to the qualities of it, but not as to its substance, when the apostle compares the body to seed sown in the earth, 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38, which is not quickened, except it die; and says of it, "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body." He does not design a substantial difference between the body, which is laid in the grave, and that which is raised, but only a difference of qualities, as is between the seed, which is sown in the earth, and the plant, which springs from it; which two differ not in their specific nature, but in some circumstances and accidents. That this is the apostle's meaning, is evident, when he says: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. The body of Christ is compared to a grain of wheat, "which is cast into the earth, and dies, and then springs up, and brings forth fruit," John xii. 24, and yet it was not a spiritual body, as to substance, but a body consisting of flesh and bones, even the same he had before his death, and such will the bodies of the saints be after the resurrection. The apostle, indeed, says, that the body, which is "sown a natural body," will be "raised a spiritual one," 1 Cor. xv. 44, but by a spiritual body he does not mean that the body will be changed into a spirit and lose its former nature and substance, but that it will now be subject and

subservient to the spirit or soul: it will be employed in spiritual service, and be delighted with spiritual objects, and will not be supported in a natural way, and by natural helps and means; such as meat, drink, clothes, sleep, and the like, but will live in a manner as angels do. Hence the children of the resurrection are said to be like unto the angels.—Again, when the apostle says, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption,” 1 Cor. xv. 50, he does not design the human body, simply considered, but as attended with sin and corruption, or with frailty and mortality; for flesh and blood, neither as sinful nor as mortal, shall enjoy the heavenly state; therefore, in order to that, “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” If it should be a new ærial, celestial, or spiritual body, different in substance from what the body now is, which shall be united to the soul, it would not be a resurrection, but a creation; besides it is not consistent with the justice of God, that new bodies should be created, and without having ever sinned, as those must be supposed to be, which are of God’s immediate creation, be united to the souls of the wicked, and be everlastingly punished with them. Nor can they be said to be truly human bodies, which are without flesh, blood, and bones; nor can they be said to be properly men, who are incorporeal; and, indeed, the same persons that have *sinned*, cannot be said to be *punished*, nor the same persons, who are *redeemed*, to be *glorified*, unless the same body be raised; which I shall,

*3dly.* Endeavour to prove. Job fully expresses his faith in this doctrine, when he expresses, “Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me,” Job xix. 26, 27. He believed that the same body, which should be destroyed by worms, should be raised again, in which he should see God, and behold him with the self-same eyes of his body he then had, and not with the eyes of another, or of a stranger; and this he firmly believed, though his body would be destroyed by worms, and his reins be consumed within him. The apostle Paul strongly asserts this truth, 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54, when he says, “This mortal, [this, and not another, pointing to his own mortal body,] must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption: so when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying which is written, death is swallowed up in victory;” which would not be true, if another, and not the same body was raised from the dead. Again, in another place, he says, Phil. iii. 21, that Christ will “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;”



but if the same body is not raised, it will not be our vile body, but another, which will be changed, and fashioned like to Christ's body. For the further confirmation of this truth, let the following things be observed :

1. The signification of the word *resurrection*. This properly signifies a raising up of that which is fallen; the same body, which fell by death, is raised by the power of God; this is the proper sense of the word, and the just meaning of it in this article, nor can it have any other; for if the same body is not raised, which fell, but another is given, it will not be a resurrection, but a creation.

2. The resurrection of the body is expressed by such *figurative* and *metaphorical phrases*, which manifestly show that it will be the same body which will be raised that dies; as when it is expressed by the *quickenings of seed*, which is sown in the earth, and by an *awaking out of sleep*. Now, as it is the same seed that is sown in the earth, and dies, that springs up, and shows itself in stalk, blade, and ear: the same, I say, as to the nature and substance; for wheat produces wheat, and not any other grain, though with some additional beauty, verdure, and greenness; it loses nothing that it had, though it grows up with that it had not before: so the same body that dies, is quickened and raised, though with additional glories and excellencies; the very same *rr* that *is sown in corruption, is raised in incorruption*: and the very same *rr* that *is sown in dishonour, is raised in glory*; the very same *rr* that *is sown in weakness, is raised in power*; and the very same *rr* that *is sown a natural body, is raised a spiritual body*; or else there is no meaning in the apostle's words. Likewise, as death is compared to a *sleep*, so the resurrection is expressed by an *awaking* out of it. Now, as it is the same body that sleeps that is awaked out of it, so it is the same body that falls asleep by death, that will be awaked in the resurrection.

3. The *places* from whence the dead will be raised, and which will be summoned to deliver them up, and out of which they will come, deserve our notice. Our Lord says, John v. 28, 29, "All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." Every one that reads those words, will easily conceive that the meaning of our Lord is, that the same bodies which are in the graves shall come forth out of them. If other bodies should be produced by God from other matter, and united to souls, they cannot, with truth, be said to come forth from the graves; none but the same bodies, which are there laid, can be supposed to come forth from thence at the resurrection. It is a trifling objection to this doctrine, made by a late writer,\* that the word *bodies* is not used in the text. What of men is laid

\* Locke's Essay on Human Understanding.

in the graves but their bodies? And what can be expected to come forth from thence but their bodies? And what but the same bodies? It is a very silly question that is put by the same writer,\* when he asks, "Would a well-meaning searcher of the Scriptures be apt to think, that if the thing here intended by our Saviour, were to teach and propose it as an article of faith, necessary to be believed by every one, that the very same bodies of the dead should be raised; would not, I say, any one be apt to think, that if our Saviour meant so, the words should rather have been *παντα τα σωματα ἃ ἐν τοις μνημείοις*, i. e. *all the bodies that are in the graves*, rather than *all who are in the graves*; which must denote persons, and not precisely bodies?" To which I reply, that supposing it our Lord's design, as I verily believe it was, to express this article of our faith, that the same bodies of the dead shall be raised, there was no need that the word *bodies* should be expressed; it was enough to say, that all that are in their graves shall come forth; and every well meaning searcher of the Scriptures will be easily induced to think, that our Lord designs that the same bodies of men that are laid in the graves shall come forth; nor is any thing more usual in common speech, than to denominate men sometimes from one part, and sometimes from another; as when we say, they are mortal, or wise, or foolish. Again, we are told, in the sacred writings, that "the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." Now, if the grave and sea, at the awful summons, shall deliver up the dead which are in them, they must deliver the very same which are laid in them; for what else can such expressions design?

4. The subject of the resurrection is the body, and that such as it is in this life, vile and mortal. Christ will "change our vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body;" and "he that raised up Christ his Son from the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit, that dwelleth in you." These bodies must be the same we carry about with us now; for what else can be called vile and mortal? Surely not bodies a-new created, which are said to be spiritual and celestial, and which never sinned, and so not subject to mortality. This also destroys an observation of a writer of great note,† that the word *σωματα*, *bodies*, is not used through the New Testament, when mention is made of the resurrection of the dead. His words are these: "He who reads with attention this discourse of St. Paul's, (meaning 1 Cor. xv.) where he discourses of the resurrection, will see, that he plainly distinguishes between the *dead* that shall be raised, and the *bodies* of the dead; for it is, *νεκροί, παντες, ὅι*, are the nominative cases to *ἐγείρονται, ζωοποιουθησονται*,

\* Locke's Essay on Human Understanding.

† Ibid.

ἐγερθῆσονται, all along, and not *σώματα*, *bodies*: which one may, with reason, think, would some where or other be expressed, if all this had been to propose it as an article of faith, that the very same bodies shall be raised. The same manner of speaking the Spirit of God observes, all through the New Testament, where it is said, *raise the dead, quicken or make alive the dead, the resurrection of the dead.*" Now, not to take notice of the dead bodies of the saints, who were raised after the resurrection of Christ, of whom it is said, Mat. xxvii. 52, "And many bodies of the saints which slept arose;" the observation will appear to be wrong, if we consider the passages now mentioned, where Christ is said "to change our vile body," Phil. iii. 21. Rom. viii. 11, or "the body of our humility," which belongs to, and is expressive of the resurrection of the dead; and where God is said to "quicken your mortal bodies:" besides, in the discourse of the apostle Paul, concerning the resurrection, in 1 Cor. xv., a question is asked, "How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come?" And an answer is given, "It is sown a natural body, and it is raised a spiritual body." Besides, how can the apostle plainly distinguish, as this author says he does in this discourse, between the dead that shall be raised, and the bodies of the dead, if the bodies of the dead all along are not mentioned?

5. The *instances* of resurrections that are already past, prove that it will be the same body which will be raised at the general resurrection. The saints which arose at the resurrection of Christ, rose with the same bodies which were laid in the graves; for it is said, that "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose." Our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead with the same body which hung upon the cross, and was laid in the grave, as is evident, from the print of the nails in his hands and feet; nor was it an ærial or spiritual body, as to its substance, for it consisted of flesh and bones, which a spirit does not, and might be felt and handled. Now, Christ's resurrection was an exemplar of the saints; their bodies shall be changed and fashioned like unto his glorious body. Enoch and Elijah were translated into heaven in the very same bodies they had when here on earth; and those which will be alive at Christ's second coming, will be changed, and caught up, in the very same bodies in which they will be found, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be for ever with him. Now, it is not reasonable to suppose, that our Lord, who partook of the same flesh and blood with the children of God, should be raised and glorified in the same body, and not they in their same bodies, for whose sake he assumed his; or that some of the saints should have the same bodies they had whilst here, and others not.

6. If the same body is not raised, how will the *end* of the

resurrection be answered, which is the glorifying of God's grace, in the salvation of his people, and of his justice in the damnation of the wicked? Hence the one is said to "come forth to the resurrection of life," and "the other to the resurrection of damnation." How shall every one "receive the things done in his body," according to that he hath done, "whether it be good or bad," if the same bodies are not raised, who have done good or evil? Where would be the justice of God, if other bodies, and not those which Christ has purchased with his blood, the Spirit has sanctified by his grace, and which have suffered for the name of Christ, should be glorified? as also if other bodies, and not those which have sinned against God, blasphemed the name of Christ, and have persecuted his saints, should suffer eternal vengeance, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? Where would be the veracity of God, either in his promises or threatenings, if the good things he has promised, are not bestowed upon the same persons to whom he has promised them, and if the punishment he has threatened, is not inflicted on the same persons to whom he has threatened it? for how they can be the same persons, without having the same bodies, I do not understand. Besides, what a disappointment will it be to the saints, who are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body, from all weakness and corruption, if not that, but another body, shall be given them, and be united to their souls, and be glorified with them!

In fine, if the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament hold forth, does not intend the resurrection of the same body; it is no other, nor better, than a *transmigration of souls* into other bodies, which was the old Pythagorean notion.

It is a low and mean quibble, that a man has not the same body at one time as at another, because he may be taller or bigger, fatter or leaner at one time than at another. It is true, that the body has not always the same fleeting particles, which are continually changing and altering, but it has always the same constituent parts; so that a man may be always said to have the same body, and to be the same man; it is the same body that is born that dies, and the same that dies that shall rise again. The several alterations and changes it undergoes, with respect to tallness or largeness, fatness or leanness, do not destroy the identity of the body. If this quibble would hold good in theological controversies, and in philosophical disputes, it might also in political affairs; and so one that owes another a sum of money, and has given his note or bond for it, after a term of time, may deny that he owes the other any thing, or that he ever borrowed any thing of him, and that it

is not his hand writing, since he has not the same body he had before. A murderer, taken up some years after the murder is committed, may plead he is not the same man, and that it was not done with the same hands he has now, and therefore, in justice he ought not to suffer. And the same may be observed in ten thousand other instances, whereby confusion must be introduced into commonwealths, and justice and order subverted in governments. This observation may be sufficient to stop the mouths of such impertinent cavillers, who are ready to ask such questions as these; whether the body, at the resurrection, will have all the individual particles of matter it ever had? or whether it will be raised, as when it was at such an age, or in such a plight? or as it was emaciated by distempers, or as laid in the grave? It is enough that it will have the constituent parts it ever had, which is sufficient to support the identity of it. I shall now proceed,

IV. To consider the *particular concern* which God the Father, Son and Spirit have in this stupendous work. It is a work that a creature is unequal to, and incapable of. It is always ascribed to God; it is God that raises and quickens the dead. If it was ever referred to a creature, it might well be judged incredible; but it need not be thought incredible that God should raise the dead. Now, as all God's works, *ad extra*, are common to all the three Persons, and this being such an one, they are all three concerned in it. And,

1. God the *Father* is concerned herein. The resurrection of Christ is frequently attributed to him, and so is the resurrection of the saints, and they are sometimes mentioned together; the former as the pledge and earnest of the latter, as saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 14, "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power;" that is, God the Father has raised up the Lord Jesus, and we may be assured that he will also raise up us, since as he is able to raise the one, he is able to raise the other, and that by his own absolute, original, and underived power; which assurance of faith, in the doctrine of the resurrection, the apostle expresses in another place, in stronger terms, "We having the same Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak, knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you," 2 Cor. iv. 14, where also the resurrection of the saints is ascribed to God the Father, who is manifestly distinguished from the Lord Jesus, whom he raised up, and by whom he will raise up the saints; not that Christ is the Father's instrument, or medium of operation, by which he will raise the dead; for,

2. *Christ*, as God, being equal with the Father, is a co-efficient cause of the resurrection; "As the Father raiseth up the dead

and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John v. 22. He is "the resurrection and the life," i. e. the Author of the resurrection unto life; he is the Prince of life, has the keys of hell and death in his hands, and can open the grave at his pleasure, and call forth the dead; at whose all-powerful and commanding voice, all that are in the graves shall come forth; which will be a further proof both of his omnipotence and omniscience; this will show that he is the Almighty, since he can "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself;" and that he knows all things, and is that living Word, before whom every creature is made manifest, and all things are naked and open; for if he was not omniscient, he could not know where every particle of matter is lodged; and, if he was not omnipotent, he could not collect them, range them in their proper places, and unite them together. That he is equal to this work, we may conclude from the resurrection of his own body; he had power to lay down his life, and take it up again; he raised up the temple of his body, after it had been destroyed three days, and so was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." As he is the Mediator, he is the meritorious and procuring cause of the resurrection; there is an influential virtue in his resurrection, not only on the justification and regeneration of his people, but also upon their resurrection from the dead. He is the "first fruits of them that slept;" the pledge and earnest of the saints' resurrection; they are, in a sense, risen with him, and shall certainly be raised by him, in virtue of their union to him, as their risen Lord. As man, his resurrection is the pattern and exemplar of the saints; their bodies shall be fashioned like to his; as his body was raised incorruptible and immortal, powerful and glorious, so shall theirs, in such manner, as never to die more, or see corruption, or be attended with distempers and death.

3. God the *Holy Ghost* has a joint and equal concern with the Father and the Son in this amazing-work. The resurrection of Christ, is the act of all the three Persons: the Father glorified his Son by raising him from the dead: he "raised him from the dead, and gave him glory." Christ of himself took up the life, which he had laid down; and though he was "put to death in the flesh," yet he "was quickened by the Spirit." So the resurrection of the saints from the dead, will be the act of all the three Persons, not only of the Father and the Son, but also of the Spirit; for "if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you," Rom. viii. 11. The bodies, as well as the souls of

the saints, are united to Christ, by virtue of which union the Spirit of Christ dwells in them; not in their souls only, but in their bodies also; "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" 1 Cor. vi. 19. Now, as the union between Christ and his people is not dissolved by death, so neither does the Spirit of God forsake the dead bodies of the saints, or neglect to take care of them; the dust of the saints is under his peculiar care and guardianship; and, at the last day, the Spirit of life from God, shall enter into them, and they shall live and stand upon their feet.—Thus all the three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, will be concerned in the resurrection of the just.

The means by which God will do this great work, and the time when he will do it, the Scriptures are not altogether silent about. As to the *means*, we are told, that "all that are in the graves shall hear his (i. e. Christ's) voice, and shall come forth," John v. 28, 29, "that the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise;" and that the "trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible;" but whether by the voice of Christ and the archangel, the shout, and the trumpet of God, we are to understand so many several distinct things, or one and the same thing, is not easy to determine. The voice of the archangel, who shall descend with Christ, may be called the voice of Christ, because formed at his command; the same may be signified by the trumpet of God, which shall be sounded, and that may be signified by the shout which shall be made, either by the archangel alone, or by all the angels with him, and this shout no other than some violent claps of thunder, which are the voice of God; like those which were heard when God descended on Mount Sinai, and gave the law from thence, which, perhaps, were formed by the ministry of angels; and this the apostle Peter may design, when he says: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," 2 Pet. iii. 10. Or by the voice of Christ, may be meant an audible and inarticulate voice of his, so powerful, as to reach all that are in their graves, such as that was which was heard at the grave of Lazarus, where "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth;" or as that which Saul heard from heaven, saying "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" or as John heard, which he says, "was as the voice of many waters." Or, perhaps, the voice of Christ may design the power of Christ, which shall be exerted upon, and shall be felt and perceived by all that are in their graves, when the archangel shall sound the last trumpet, attended with the shout of all the rest of the angelic host.

As for the *time*, when the dead shall be raised, it cannot be

exactly fixed, nor does it become us curiously to inquire into it; "It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," Acts i. 7. As no man knows the day and hour of judgment, so no man knows the day when the dead will be raised. In general, it is said, that "it will be in the last day, and at the coming of Christ," John vi. 39, 40. 44. 54, and xi. 24; 1 Cor. xv. 27, at which time the dead in Christ shall rise first; that is, they shall rise before the wicked, which will be the first resurrection. Not that the martyrs shall rise before the rest of the righteous, but all the righteous shall rise at Christ's coming; but whether their rising will be successive, or be at once, in a moment, is not very material. The change that will be made on the living, will be in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; but it is not so manifest, that the resurrection of the dead will be so quick and sudden, but rather that it will be successive; since it is said, "Every man in his own order shall be raised," 1 Cor. xv. 23, which may be understood either of order of time, so that they that died first, shall be first raised; or of dignity, so that those who have been the most eminent for gifts, grace, usefulness, &c. shall be first called forth out of their graves, which, perhaps, may be the differing glory that will be upon the saints at the resurrection, of which the apostle speaks, saying, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

There are many curious and needless questions which are asked concerning the resurrection, and the state of those who are raised; as, whether abortions, or untimely births, shall be raised? at what age, and in what stature the dead shall rise? whether with their present deformities or not? whether there will be any distinction of sexes? and whether persons shall know one another? But these I shall not give myself the trouble to answer, but pass on to that which will be more useful; which is,

V. And lastly, To show the *importance* and *use* of this doctrine.

1st, I shall consider the *importance* of it. It is a fundamental article of the Christian faith; it is called "the foundation of God, which stands sure," 2 Tim. ii. 19, though some deny it, and others endeavour to sap it, but none can destroy it: it is reckoned among the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, Heb. vi. 1, 2, and is joined with eternal judgment, which it precedes, and in order to which it is absolutely requisite. The resurrection of Christ stands and falls with it; for, "if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain," 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14. The whole gospel is connected



with it; if there is no truth in this, there is none in that. As the doctrine of the resurrection receives confirmation from the doctrines of personal election, the gift of the persons of the elect to Christ, the covenant of grace, redemption by Christ, union with him, and the sanctification of the Spirit, so these can have no subsistence without supposing that. If the dead rise not, there can be no expectation of a future state; "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," 1 Cor. xv. 18. And so there is no difference between them and the brutes, *as the one dieth, so dieth the other*; and if this be the case, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," verse 19. Besides, as has been observed, the resurrection is absolutely necessary to eternal judgment: without it the judgment cannot proceed; for, how should "every one receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," if his body is not raised? To say no more, practical religion much depends upon the truth of this doctrine; the denial of it must open a door to all manner of licentiousness. The opposers of this doctrine have been observed, in all ages, to be very bad livers; and, indeed, it need not be wondered at; it is a natural consequence, "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," 1 Cor. xv. 32. On the other hand, where this doctrine is firmly believed, and strictly attended to, there will be a studious concern to glorify God, by a becoming life and conversation. This may be observed in the experience and practice of the apostle Paul, which he delivers in these words, "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust; and herein (says he,) upon this account, do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men," Acts xxiv. 15, 16.

*2dly*, I shall now consider the *use* of this doctrine; whatever is important, and of moment, must be useful. This doctrine is of use,

1. For *instruction*. It serves to enlarge our views of the divine perfections; as the immutability of God in his purposes; his faithfulness in his promises; his omniscience, which extends to all creatures, and every thing that belongs to them; and his omnipotence, which nothing can withstand. Those who deny the resurrection, must not only be ignorant of the Scriptures but of the power of God, as the Sadducees were. This doctrine teaches us to think highly of Jesus Christ, as God over all, blessed for ever, as possessed of all divine perfections; since he is the resurrection and the life, the first-fruits of them that slept; he is the efficient cause by whom, and the meritorious cause through whom, and the exemplar according to whom the resurrection of the saints will be. The concern which the Holy Spirit

has in our resurrection, may serve to endear him to us, and teach us not to grieve him, by whom we are "sealed unto the day of redemption," *i. e.* of our bodies from corruption and death; he not only sanctifies our bodies, and dwells in them, but has the care of our dust, and will quicken it at the last day. What an instruction is this doctrine to faith and trust in God, Father, Son, and Spirit? If God can and will raise the dead, what is it he cannot do? Faith should not stagger at any thing which God has promised to perform, or be discouraged at any difficulties in its way, or at any trials and afflictions it meets with. The consideration of this, that God quickens the dead, Rom. iv. 17—20, quickened Abraham's faith, so that he "staggered not at the promise through unbelief," though there were difficulties attending it insuperable to nature. And when the apostles had the sentence of death in themselves, they were directed not to trust in themselves, "but in God, which raiseth the dead, who, (say they,) delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us," 2 Cor. i. 9, 10. Moreover, this doctrine may teach us, that all due and proper care ought to be taken of our bodies, both whilst living, and when dead. All proper care ought to be taken of them whilst living; though they are not to be pampered, they are not to be starved: they are to be fed and clothed, according to the blessings of life, which God bestows upon men, provided the bounds of moderation and decency be observed; for to transgress these by luxury and intemperance, is not to use our bodies well, but to abuse them: and when the body is dead, care ought to be taken that it be decently interred, which may be confirmed by the examples of Abraham, Joseph of Arimathea, and others.

2. This doctrine is of use for *consolation*. The day of the resurrection will be a day of consolation to the saints. Hence the Syriac version reads those words of Martha, "I know that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day," John xi. 24, thus: "I know that he shall rise again, in the consolation at the last day." Then will be the consummation of the saints' joy and comfort, and a believing view of it now must be very delightful to them; as they are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, so they may lift up their heads with joy, because this their redemption draweth near. The consideration of this doctrine must be a great support to saints under trials and afflictions, under diseases and distempers of body, in the views of death, and the several changes the body shall undergo after death; I say, it must be a very comfortable consideration, that, in a little time, all these trials will be ended; there will be no more diseases, nor death: and though the body, for a while, shall be the food of worms, and return to its original dust, yet it shall be raised immortal

and incorruptible, powerful and glorious: "This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruption must put on incorruption;" and in our flesh shall we see God, and enjoy the company of angels and saints. To conclude: this doctrine must be of great use to support persons under the loss of near relations; when they consider, that though they are dead, they shall rise again; though they have parted with them, it is but for a time; and therefore they should not "sorrow, even as others, which have no hope," 1 Thess. iv. 14, 17, 18, "for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him; wherefore we may comfort one another with these words, and so shall we be ever with the Lord."

A  
VINDICATION  
OF THE  
EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE OF MAN'S SALVATION  
BY  
THE FREE GRACE OF GOD,  
FROM THE  
CHARGE OF PROMOTING LICENTIOUSNESS.

By MR. ABRAHAM TAYLOR,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

ROMANS v. 20, 21; vi. 1, 2.—Where sin abounded, grace much more abounded; that as sin has reigned to death, so grace might reign, through righteousness, to eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: how shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer in it?

WHEN rational creatures rebel against their righteous and mighty Maker, they cut themselves off from all right to claim any benefit or blessing at his hands; they deserve nothing from him, but wrath and indignation; and if they are recovered from the ruin they have brought on themselves, and are made partakers of salvation, it is from the good pleasure of his will; and it must be in a way that does not injure his perfections. God foreknew the fall of creatures, endued with reason; and it lay entirely in his breast, whether he would provide for their rescue, or for the deliverance of any number of them, or whether he would leave them, to feel the bitter consequences of their apostasy; if the last is supposed, he acts no injustice, for he gives them no more than their deserts. When a numerous company of the mighty potentates of heaven conspired against the Highest, under Satan's banner, proudly thinking to be more glorious than God had made them, he, who brought them into being, by the word of his power, cast them out of those thrones of honour, in which they sat exalted, banished them his presence, and doomed them to suffer eternal years of woe and pain. He had not a thought of mercy towards the princes of light, when rebellion rose among them, but entirely cast them off, and has reserved them in everlasting chains, under darkness, to the

judgment of the great day, at which time fulness of torment will be inflicted upon them, and they will not be suffered to range about the world, as they do at present, but will be shut up in that prison, where sorrow will take up its abode, and where despair will for ever keep up the horrors of its gloomy reign.

No one, who owns the Scriptures, ever had the face to charge God with injustice, for condemning the morning stars to blackness and darkness. He might, without any stain to his honour, have left the whole race of sinful men to destruction; for they, after transgression, have no more claim to his favour, than the devils; but he was pleased to choose a remnant of them, in whose salvation he might make known the riches of his grace. That this might be done without injury to his other perfections, he appointed Christ to be the Redeemer, to satisfy his justice, and so to procure for those for whom he died, a freedom from all evil, and a title to all good. The salvation of sinners, whether we regard it, in its platform from eternity, or in its being actually brought about in time, or in its entire completion at the great rising day, is all by the grace of God, and on account of what Christ has done and suffered, and is not in the least owing to any thing which is in man, or is done by him. The revelation which gives an account of man's salvation by grace, is what is properly styled *the gospel of God*; and when men hear the evangelical doctrine opened and unfolded, unless the Holy Spirit leads them to the knowledge of the truth, they either rise up with rage against it, or they abuse it. Conceited mortals, who are for working out their salvation by their own strength, cannot bear that the glory of it should be given entirely to the grace of God, and not partly to their feeble endeavours; therefore they are filled with hatred against the doctrine of grace, and wickedly and maliciously charge it with opening a door for licentiousness; and in drawing this spiteful indictment against the glorious gospel of the blessed Jesus, it is to be feared, they have been not a little strengthened by the odious consequences, which are sometimes attempted to be deduced from it, by such as wrest it, to countenance their immoralities. These, because they do not care to leave their sins, or to practise the difficult duties of repentance, self-denial, and mortification, have been ready to say, that if salvation is by grace, they shall certainly be saved, seeing they are elected, however they live; but herein they discover their great ignorance of the design of God, in the Christian scheme of salvation, which was not barely to debase man, and to exalt Christ, but to advance holiness.

The great apostle of the Gentiles, in the words which have been chosen to speak from, declared, that when sin had brought men under the desert of eternal destruction, and so had abounded

and reigned to death, grace much more abounded, to bring about the salvation of men, and so reigned to eternal life; but that it only reigned in a way of righteousness, because God would not dishonour his perfections; and that therefore it could reign to life no other way than by Christ, who could, by his active and passive obedience, satisfy the offended justice of God, and procure eternal life for sinners. He was sensible, that when he had asserted, that the grace of God was glorified, in the salvation of them who had transgressed, some perverse creatures might plead, that the more men sin, the more the grace of God is glorified in their salvation; and might hence infer, that they may abound in sin, that more glory may be brought to the grace of God; he therefore put the question, whether men might continue in sin, that grace might abound, which he answered in the negative, in a way that showed his utmost abhorrence of the vile suggestion; and, to support his answer, he added a very strong argument, in the form of a question, to let us know, that it was morally impossible, that if we are dead to sin, we can continue in the wilful commission of iniquity. This accomplished minister of Christ, at the same time that he advanced the grace of God, took care to guard his doctrine against the pernicious consequences, which vain and ignorant pretenders might draw from it: he, when he exalted grace, recommended holiness, as necessary: he acted like a wise master-builder, who does not bestow a great measure of garniture on the front of the structure, which he rears, and leave the other parts entirely without ornament, but takes care that the whole edifice be well proportioned and compacted together, and that all the parts of it be set off in the best manner.

It has been common at all times, and never more than in our day, for the opinionated sons of flesh to rail at the doctrine of salvation by grace, and to charge it with encouraging licentiousness; therefore, to vindicate this glorious doctrine against so vile and diabolical a calumny, cannot be unseasonable or improper: and it may very easily be made to appear, that there is not the least foundation for such an unrighteous accusation. In doing of which,

I. I shall show what we understand by the Scripture doctrine of *man's salvation by the free grace of God*, and shall give a short summary of those evangelical points, which we take in our notion of it; in doing of which, I shall evince, in the general, that it does not encourage licentiousness.

In the oracles of truth, the salvation of men is attributed to the *free* and the *abundant grace of God*. The apostle Paul has declared, that the design of God in saving sinners, was to display the riches of his grace, in the following remarkable passage: "God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith

he loved us, when we were dead in sins, has quickened us;—that he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ; for by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, least any one should boast,” Eph. ii. 4—9. It is not by the works of the law, but by free mercy, that we are saved; for we are told, “that the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared in that, not by works of righteousness, which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us,” Tit. iii. 4, 5. It is, to the comfort of all that are weary and heavy laden with the burden of sin, declared, that “the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is through one, even Jesus Christ, has abounded to many; and that they who receive abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, even Jesus Christ,” Rom. v. 15, 17. All saving blessings are conveyed to us in and through Christ, because he purchased them for us, by the infinite merit of his obedience and death; yet salvation is ascribed to rich, free, and abundant grace, because it was by grace that we were appointed to salvation, and it was love which provided a Redeemer for us, who might satisfy infinite justice for us, when we were guilty; might reconcile us, when we were enemies, and might save us, when we were lost; that so grace might reign, through righteousness, in our recovery from ruin.

Salvation, taken in the general, is ascribed to the grace of God, in the sacred volume; and further, all the principal parts of it, such as election, justification, regeneration, and effectual calling, and the consummating our happiness, are declared to be from grace. If we consider the heirs of salvation as chosen by God, and predestinated to eternal glory, it is from his sovereign grace; it is expressly said, “God has chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world; having predestinated us to the adoption of children, through Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the sovereign pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace,” Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. If we regard those who are redeemed from wrath, as having their sins forgiven, and being justified, it must be granted, that it is because of the active and passive obedience of Christ, imputed to them, and is the reward of his merit; but if we bear in mind, that it was grace which provided a righteousness of infinite value, and which imputes it to us, we cannot wonder to find it declared in Scripture, that “in Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God’s grace;” that “we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption purchased by Christ, and, being so, are made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life,” Eph. v. 7. If we view such as are delivered from the power of indwelling sin, as born again, as turned from darkness to light, and as effectually called,

we must, if we believe the authority of God's word, own that they are indebted for their regeneration, their conversion, and their holy vocation to free and efficacious grace, and sovereign distinguishing mercy. The Scriptures of truth have told us, that it is "God the Father, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begot us again to a lively hope, and to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and never fading;" that it is "according to his mercy that he saves, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit;" that "it is through the tender mercies of our God, that the day-spring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace;" that it is God "who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, but is since made manifest by the appearing of Christ in the flesh," 1 Pet. i. 3. Tit. iii. 5. Luke i. 78, 79. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. If we let our thoughts go on to the consummating of the design of God and Christ, in perfect blessedness being conferred on those who are justified and sanctified, we must still confess that they are indebted for the crowns of glory, which they will wear in the country of light, to abundant mercy and rich grace; for we are assured, "that grace must reign through righteousness to eternal life," Romans v. 21; vi. 23, and that this, let it be ever so great a blessing, is the free gift of God: so that whether we consider our salvation as it was decreed by God before time, as it was purchased by Christ, in the fulness of time, as it is begun in the day of God's power, or as it is completed when we leave the body, we must own that it is all of grace, and is the gift of grace.

As God, in saving sinners, designed to glorify his free grace, and to make his undeserved goodness appear in its full beauty, so one great end he had in view was to promote holiness. All the several parts of salvation are mentioned in Scripture, as what should stir us up to abound in holiness and good works. If we are *elected* by God, it is that "we may be holy and blameless before him in love," Eph. i. 4, 5. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 2, and if we reap the benefits of electing *love*, it is "through sanctification of the Spirit to obedience." If Christ "gave himself for us," it was that "he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 13. If we are *ransomed*, not with *corruptible things*, but with the "precious blood of Christ," it is, that "we may be delivered from a vain conversation, and may pass the time of our sojourning here below in fear," 1 Pet. i. 17, 18, 19. If we are "bought with a price," it is that we may "look upon ourselves to be no longer our own," but may be sensible of the obligations we are under to "glorify God in our



bodies and spirits, which are his," 1 Cor. vi. 20. If we are "new formed by God," it is "for himself, that we may show forth his praise," Isa. xliii. 21. If we are made *partakers* of a *spiritual vocation*, it is, that as he, who has called us, is holy, "we may be holy in all manner of conversation," 2 Pet. i. 15. If we receive the *earnest* of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, we must "serve God acceptably, and with godly fear," Heb. xii. 28. If we are brought to "see God" in the light of glory, it is not without "following after holiness," Heb. xii. 14. If we enter within the "gates of the heavenly city," and "eat of the tree of LIFE," Rev. xxii. 14, 15, we must be such as do God's commandments, and do not "give way to impurity, or love to make a lie."

We find the Scripture is far from supposing, that man's being indebted to free grace, for all the parts of his salvation, is any encouragement to act licentiously; it asserts, that if man is made partaker of the benefits, which are the fruits of undeserved love, he is by this laid under obligations to be holy, and to abound in good works; that he may manifest, that he has had imparted to him the gifts of mercy; that he may show his gratitude to the author and giver of the things which relate to his everlasting peace, by living to his praise; and that he may have a meetness to inhabit the pure and incorruptible realms, where he shall see his Redeemer as he is. When men think, that ascribing the salvation of sinners to the free grace of God, has a tendency to loose the bands of duty, it is because they have no right knowledge of the doctrine of grace, and because they talk of what they do not understand. We may take a summary view of those evangelical truths, which are comprehended in what is commonly called *the doctrine of man's salvation by grace*, in the following six articles:

1. The very notion of salvation includes in it the *need* the persons have to be saved, who are the subjects of it; for if there had been no transgression, there would have been no need of a restoration; so that if we suppose men are not happy, without salvation, we must allow, that, in themselves, they are in a miserable condition. God made man upright, and he came pure out of his Maker's hands; who entered into a covenant of works with him, and all his posterity in him; as a common head, promising life, on condition of perfect obedience: this covenant our common father broke, by sinning against God; by this apostasy, he, and we in him, fell from original righteousness, lost communion with God, and so became dead in sin; the guilt of the first Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity, and a corrupt nature is derived to them, whereby they are averse to all good, and prone to all evil. Having fallen from God, it is not possible for us to restore ourselves; for all the good we can do, is previously owing to God, by the law of

creation, and so cannot make atonement for what we omit; but, setting this aside, our minds are darkened, our wills are filled with enmity against God, and our affections run astray from him; so that when we do what is materially good, we do not act from a principle of love to our supreme Lawgiver, we regard not his will, neither do we make his glory our end. The consequence of all this is, that the Most High will not manifest his mercy to us, on account of any thing in us, or any thing done by us: we are debtors to his justice, and must fall victims to his anger, unless he is pleased, out of his sovereign free love, to remember us in our low estate, and provide for our recovery, in a way not derogatory to his perfections, and not inconsistent with his maintaining his own honour.

2. God foreknew the *full of man*, and knew how to turn it to his own glory; he, in his sovereign pleasure, thought fit not to leave the whole of the human race to perish: a certain determinate number he chose in Christ to salvation, without foresight of good works, as causes moving him hereto, but according to the good pleasure of his will: these he has predestinated, to be conformed to the image of his Son, that in time they may be holy and blameless before him; and that at the end of their days, they may be happy with him. For the salvation of his elect God the Father provided, before the world began, in entering into a covenant with God the Son, as their Head, and with them in him: this covenant being made between two immutable Persons, is invariable; and the most ample provision is made for the salvation of such as were represented by Christ, seeing their welfare is not made to depend on uncertain conditions to be performed by them, but all things are promised freely to be, by grace, wrought in them, in due time, relating to holiness and happiness.

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Surety and Redeemer, in the *fulness of time*, appeared in the flesh, and, being God as well as man, offered a satisfaction of infinite value to the offended justice of his Father, by fulfilling the law, and suffering death, for the sins of his people: and all that are justified before God, are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption purchased by Christ. The active and the passive obedience of the Redeemer is imputed to them, as their sole justifying righteousness; and for the sake of this only their sins are forgiven, and their persons are accepted as righteous in the sight of their Judge, and not for the sake of faith, repentance, or sincere obedience. Faith is wrought in their hearts, to receive Christ, and to rest upon him; and as it is employed in justification, it only looks to him as a Priest, dying for sin, and atoning for transgression: but, in the full compass of it, it receives him in all his offices; it obeys him as a Prophet, and submits to him as a King; though he delivers from the curse of the law, as a broken cove-

nant of works, yet he never designed to abrogate it, as a rule of life, and to substitute in its room a new remedial law of grace, which, instead of perfect righteousness, requires sincere obedience, as a condition of God's favour.

4. *Regeneration* is not owing to man's power, will, or abilities; but he is renewed, or new-created, by the power of the Holy Spirit, who enlightens his mind, renews his will, and purifies his affections. This is a work of grace, and he is altogether passive in it: but the design of this work upon him is, that he may be converted, or rendered active to every good work, and may be sanctified, or live to the praise and glory of God. The Holy Spirit, who is the efficient cause to work all grace in such as are born from above, enables them to repent of their sins, to resist indwelling corruption, and Satan's temptations, to abound in good works, and to practise the duties of mortification and self-denial, with a view not of men's applause, but of advancing God's glory in the world, and from a desire of showing their gratitude to the Father, who chose them to holiness and salvation; to the Son, who redeemed them from wrath and a vain conversation; and to the Spirit, who new forms them for himself, that they may show forth his praise.

5. Such as are *sanctified*, are not left to carry on, by their own power, the work which they could not begin, but they are enabled, by the Holy Spirit, to hold on their way in the paths of duty: having continual supplies from him, as a Spirit of grace, they advance from lower to higher degrees of holiness, they go from strength to strength; they fight the good fight of faith, and finish the course of godliness laid out for them; when they depend on the aids of divine grace, they move not with a heavy pace, and with slow steps, but they go on with freedom and vigour; forgetting the things that are behind, they reach after the things which are before, and they eagerly follow after holiness, without which none can see God; by the light of faith, here, for their comfort; or in the light of glory, hereafter, for the consummating their eternal happiness.

6. When true believers have finished their *work of faith*, and their *labour of love*, grace, which laid the foundation of their happiness in the decree of election, and in the covenant between the Father and the Son, lays on the top-stone of their salvation in glory. The good Spirit conducts them to the land of uprightness, where no unruly motion will ever disturb the quiet of their breasts, but where, in sinless innocence, they will spend a happy eternity; and, with a perfectly holy frame, will, to everlasting, engage in God's service, without the least inclination to deviate from him.

If we respect our salvation, as ordered by God from eternity, it was by grace, but that we might be holy; if we consider it as coming to us freely, as the reward of Christ's purchase, it was

that we might be conformed to his image, and might act in obedience to him, as his peculiar people; if we view it as it is applied to us by the Spirit, it is that we may be holy here, though not perfectly holy, and that we may be completely holy hereafter in a better world. Though salvation is by grace, yet holiness is a necessary and essential part of it; and it was never the design of God to manifest his grace, without bringing such as are the subjects of it to bear some resemblance to himself in purity.

Seeing matters stand thus, it is only ignorance of the doctrine of grace, which makes some men charge it with opening a door to licentiousness, or relaxing the obligations to duty; and which makes others draw odious and false consequences from it to encourage themselves in laziness and immoralities. Did God the Father choose the heirs of glory to holiness, as well as happiness? Did God the Son redeem them, by his precious blood, that they might be zealous of good works? And does God the Holy Spirit renew them, in the whole frame of their minds, that they may walk in the paths of purity, and in the ways of uprightness? And will any, who desire to be made partakers of salvation, venture to run counter to the end the sacred Three had in view, as they took their different parts, in contriving, procuring, and effecting the happiness of such as are rescued from destruction? Are believers chosen, redeemed, and renewed, that they may be holy, though not because they are holy? And can any have the face to say, that holiness, which was designed to be promoted in election, in redemption, and in regeneration, is not absolutely necessary, if it must not be made the cause or condition of salvation? It is only by reason of men's pride and vanity, which put them upon desiring to be their own saviours, that they are so forward to arraign the doctrine of grace, which leaves no room for boasting, as being an unholy doctrine; and it is from men's gross ignorance and aggravated wickedness that they turn it into lasciviousness. God has declared, that the great ends of showing the riches of free grace, of exalting Christ, and of promoting holiness, may be carried on together; and let him be true, though men, who run into opposite schemes of error, be found liars. Nothing can be more intolerable, than the arrogance of such as bespatter and reproach the doctrine of grace, and nothing can be more detestable, than the impiety of such as pervert and abuse it.

II. Having in the general, under the former head, *vindicated* the doctrine of grace, from the charge of promoting licentiousness; I shall now more distinctly show, with respect to the several parts of our salvation, that no *encouragement* is given to negligence or impurity, by their being ascribed to the free grace of God.

It cannot be denied, but that the glorious doctrine of free

grace has been abused, by men of wicked principles, and vile practices. Some, before the apostles had finished their warfare here on earth, endeavoured to "turn the grace of God into wantonness," who are most severely condemned by Peter, in his second epistle, and by Jude in his epistle, both which were written on the same occasion: the former of these has the following expressions, 2 Pet. ii. 9, 10, 12—14, 17—19: "The Lord knows how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment, to be punished, chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness: they shall perish in their own corruption, and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness: they count it pleasure to riot in the day time; having eyes full of the adulteress, and which cannot cease from sin: to them the mist of darkness is reserved for ever, for when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure, through the lusts of the flesh, those who for a while escaped from them who lived in error; whilst they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of sin." The other inspired writer has given us the reason of his inditing his epistle, Jude 3, 4, in the following words: "It was needful for me to write to you, and to exhort you, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; for there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." Before the good apostles had sealed the truth with their blood, the Gnostics and Nicolaitans had crept in among Christians, before they were aware, who were ungodly pretenders, that were forward to talk of the free grace of God, in great swelling words of vanity; but abused it by making it a handle for loose practices; for they held, that fornication and adultery were things lawful, and that it was no sin to equivocate, or to conform occasionally to the heathen ceremonies, and they practised all manner of abominable wickedness. These had their impiety from Simon Magus, the father of almost all heresies. This impostor, who pretended he was the supreme God, who appeared differently, as the Father, as the Son, and as the Spirit, in different dispensations, lived in avowed fornication with one Helena, a common prostitute, whom he had brought from the stew; and he gave out that she was the first product of his mind; that by her he made the angels, who had hitherto usurped the government of the world, and had not behaved well: he asserted, that the authors of the Scriptures were inspired by these angels, and consequently that they were not worthy of regard: he therefore allowed such as believed in him and Helena, to live as they pleased, persuading them not to mind the threatenings of the law, and saying that salvation was only by grace, and that good works were not necessary, there being no essential difference between the things commanded in the Old Testament, and the matters there prohibited.

thus, by promising men liberty, he made them the servants of sin; for his followers ran into all manner of impurity. We see, that the abusing the doctrine of grace, was one of the abominations of the first heretic that infested the church, after the appearance of our Saviour in the flesh; his corrupt tenets, as to this, were embraced by all the several sects, which took the proud, vainglorious title of Gnostics, or enlightened persons, men of deep knowledge, and which prevailed very much in the second century. This wicked abuse of a most holy doctrine, is what was not confined to those early ages; the churches of Christ have often been pestered with a generation of vipers, who are for turning the grace of God into wantonness. When the devil has not been able to run down this comfortable doctrine, by open opposition, he has employed his missionaries to disgrace it, by drawing odious consequences from it. Some impure persons can talk much of free grace; nay, they may affect to be more zealous for the love of God in election, than many who have felt the blessed effects of it, and may scarce be able to bear to hear of any other truth: these, though they may speak great swelling words, about free, rich, sovereign grace, yet have no part or portion in it; but are in the gall of bitterness, and under the bond of iniquity, as well as Simon, the first founder of their impiety. They are really enemies to Christ, and they wound him in the house of his friends; and, unless they are brought to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth, their condemnation will be more severe than that of ignorant creatures, who knew none of the truths of the gospel.

There have been some who, by their life and conversation, have showed that they were far from being enemies to holiness, who have amused themselves with fancies about God's loving and delighting in his elect, while they were in a state of nature, of his seeing no sin in his people, and of good works not being necessary to salvation, and who have been forward to condemn pressing men to duty, as legal preaching, and to speak of exhorting to repentance, mortification, and self-denial, as low and mean stuff. Far be it from us to charge some who have gone into this way of thinking and talking, with turning the grace of God into wantonness; however, as we can state the doctrine we vindicate from the charge of Antinomianism, so as to keep it entirely clear of attributing too much to the will of men, without admitting these positions, which have great difficulties attending them, we certainly are at liberty to do it: and as we would not take into our notion of it what we think easy to be perverted, we desire not to have the opinions of others, which are not embraced by the generality of the pleaders for free grace, attributed to us.

If we allow the Scripture to be given by divine inspiration,

we must own, matters are expressed there in the justest way; and we shall find it safe to speak according to it, if we are not guilty of the intolerable folly, which most erring men run into, of setting one imperfect sentence in opposition to the whole tenor of divine revelation, or the analogy of faith. As to the case before us, we have a noble account given us, by the apostle Paul, of the tendency of the doctrine of grace, to promote piety, honesty, and temperance, in the following words, Tit. ii. 11—14, which are worthy of the Holy Spirit, who dictated them to him: "The grace of God, which brings salvation, has appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we live soberly, righteously, and piously in this present world; expecting the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and might purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." This is an excellent account of the true doctrine, which the ministers of the gospel are to preach; and therefore it is no wonder, that the inspired instructor added to this declaration, the following charge to Titus, his own son, after the common faith: "These things speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority; let no man despise thee." We are to show men their duty, to reprove them for their sins, and to exhort them to follow after holiness, that they may adorn the gospel of God; and we must not be daunted, if we are called legal preachers, and retailers of duties: we are likewise to stand up for the freeness, the riches, and the abundance of divine grace, and must not be intimidated, in defending that doctrine which attributes men's salvation to the mercy of God, and the purchase of Christ, by the senseless clamour raised against us by a generation of formal pharisees, as if we promoted licentiousness.

If men would think coolly, and argue rationally, there would be little need of any thing more than fairly stating the doctrine of grace, in order to vindicate it from the charge of Antinomianism, or to show that it has no tendency to promote licentiousness; but as men, while they are in a state of unregeneracy, are swelled with spiritual pride, and puffed up with high and vain conceits of their own performances, they cannot bear the thoughts of being wholly indebted to free grace for their salvation, and therefore they hate the doctrine, because it supposes them not to be so considerable in the eyes of God, as they imagine they should be, and so stains the pride of their glory; and as they hate it, it is no wonder that they oppose and malign it, and set it off in the most odious colours, as if it did not include the necessity of that holiness of heart and life, which they are not really and sincerely affected to; though, to serve a turn, and to throw a mist before the eyes of the unwary, they would seem noisy advocates for it. No charge can be really more

unjust, than what furious Legalists bring against the evangelical doctrine of free grace, which will, in some measure, appear, if the following particulars are carefully weighed.

1. The doctrine of free and absolute election no ways *weakens* the obligations we lie under to follow after holiness, because it is averred, by all who know any thing of the Scripture account of this glorious and comfortable doctrine, that though election is free and sovereign,\* absolute and unconditional, though men are not elected to happiness, because God foresaw they would be holy, yet he chose them to holiness.† Election does not dissolve the obligation men lie under to God, as creatures; as they are formed by him out of nothing, as they are supported by his providential care, and are supplied by his bounty, and as in his hand are all their ways; they, by the law of creation, are obliged to love him, to obey his will, and, in all their natural, moral, and religious actions, to aim at the advancement of his glory, as their chief and ultimate end. A person must have a head very oddly turned, that can bring himself, on calm reflection, to think, that all these obligations, which lie upon a man, as he is a creature, are either cancelled or weakened, by God's having had thoughts of peace towards him, before the foundation of the world. It is strange arguing, that God's kind intentions to him, loose the bands of duty, or break the relation wherein he stands to his Maker and Law-giver, as his subject. Nay, if we could suppose that a man, in a state of nature, could get any positive proof that he is the elect of God, which by the way is impossible; yet could it be so, this would be so far from striking out his debt of obedience, that it would add to it a debt of love and gratitude. Surely, no one can say, that if a man could have the surest evidence of his being elected by God, he has liberty to return to him hatred for love, and contempt for kindness. Certainly, an all-wise Being cannot be thought to throw away favours on men, which would be the case, if they were more at liberty to cast contempt on his law, and to repeat acts of rebellion against him, by reason of his having pre-ordained their happiness.

If we consult the oracles of truth, we shall find, that the purpose of God, in electing persons, and in predestinating them to life, was, that they might be holy; and there will be no need to multiply passages, tending to prove this, if we carefully consider the following noble rapture, which the apostle Paul, inspired with holy joy, uttered, in the beginning of his epistle to the saints at Ephesus; "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things in Christ, according as he has chosen

\* See especially the learned Mr. Ridgley's body of Divinity, vol. i. p. 236. col. 2. 240. col. 1.

† See the same useful work; p. 277, col. 2. 231. col. 2.



us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace; by which he has made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, and the forgiveness of sins; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated, according to the purpose of him, who works all things according to the counsel of his will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who have trusted in Christ," Eph. i. 3—7. 11, 12. Nothing can be more express than this admirable passage, to prove the absolute freeness of election and predestination: it is expressly asserted, that we are chosen by God in Christ, and predestinated to the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will; nay, his sovereign pleasure; for it is according to the counsel of him that works all things, or certainly and infallibly brings all things about, after the purpose of his will; we are chosen in Christ, and are pre-ordained to the privilege of a change of state by adoption, which is merited and purchased for us by Christ. Now, the end of God, in choosing us, and predestinating us to the grace of adoption, was, that we might be holy and without blame before him in love; and that we might be to the praise and the glory of his grace. The end of God's choosing us was, that we might be holy; and does his act in electing us, give us a liberty to frustrate, as far as in us lies, the end of his choice? Certainly every one, who would show himself to be the elect of God, ought to comply with the end, which he had in view, in choosing him to honour, glory, and immortality. What God has joined together, let not vain man pretend to separate; and, indeed, it will never be separated, by those who are really the subjects of electing love; otherwise we must allow, that God has purposed something in vain, which is a thought too shocking and blasphemous to be admitted, concerning a Being of infinite wisdom and power. Our obligation to holiness is not weakened, but strengthened, by considering that those whom God, out of his sovereign pleasure, chose and ordained to life, he also designed should be holy. Accordingly it is matter of fact, that the generality of such as have embraced the doctrine of absolute election, have been most exemplary in their walk, being sensible that they ought to comply with the end of God, as well as enjoy the privileges he has laid out for them; whereas too many of those, who would be for tying God's choice to their foreseen faith and good works, as conditions moving him thereto, take care, by their want of faith, and neglect of good works, to show, that they either are not of the number of God's elect, or have not yet felt the blessed effects of it. A frothy temper of mind, with respect to things sacred, and an unwary conversation,

have too commonly been the scandalous badges of such, as must needs have it, that they are chosen by God, for foreseen faith and holiness, and have been the most eager to prate against the true Scripture doctrine of absolute election, with lying and malicious words, by representing it as calculated to promote looseness of life.

It must, indeed, be owned that some profane sinners have abused this doctrine, and have broken in upon the connexion that there is between the initial parts, and the sure marks of salvation in this life, and the completion of it in the life of glory. But, whatever unruly sinners may imagine, the end will never be bestowed, where the means appointed to bring about that end, nay, which are the beginning of what is to be brought to an end, are entirely thrown aside. Therefore it is mere rant for a hair-brained sinner to say, if I am elected to salvation, I shall be saved, let me live as I list; if I am a chosen vessel, sin shall not hinder my happiness. This is nothing but rumbling talk; it is no better sense than if a man should say, if I am elected, I shall be saved, though I should never be brought into a state of salvation; or, I shall be saved, without salvation; only in this last way of speaking, the nonsense is so apparent, that it strikes even upon the most dull apprehension. Supposing a man was to break a limb, and should refuse to have it set, and was gravely to argue, that his times are in God's hand, and that if it is determined he shall live without being lame, it shall certainly be so with him, though he uses no means; or supposing a man was to be ready to famish for hunger, and was burnt up with thirst, if he should say, that if he is to live strong, and in health, he assuredly will, whether he takes sustenance or not; supposing such cases, should we not reckon persons, who thus chatter, to be directly mad, or to be mere idiots? Certainly we should, when yet they speak only with reference to the comforts of this life. Surely then it is worse than mad, because the matter is of vastly greater importance than the case of this natural life, for any to pretend, that as eternal life is the gift of electing love, it can be obtained without the use of the means which God has determined should be used, and without the grace he actually works in all that he saves. Without holiness, there is no proof of election, therefore absolute election does not lessen our regards to holiness. If persons say they are elected, let them prove they are partakers of the blessings which result from the grace of election by a holy life; for all that are chosen by God to salvation, are sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Whoever draws this absurd consequence, that if he is elected, he shall be saved, though he does as he will, gives the greatest ground to suspect that he never experienced the love of God; and if he belongs to the election of grace, when he is actually gathered in, he will have very

different thoughts, and will be filled with shame and humiliation for having done any thing to disgrace such a holy doctrine.

If we will not presumptuously deny what is laid down in the oracles of truth, we must be as strenuous to maintain that God chose his people to holiness, as we should be to stand up for the notion of election being only from his sovereign grace; and then, as we shall not make the purpose of the unchangeable God depend on the mutable will of frail men, so we shall never weaken the obligations we are under to be holy, by maintaining absolute election. We are, in compliance to God's end, to practise holiness; and so we have a further obligation added to that which lies upon us as creatures, to do whatever is by any means made known to us to be the will of our Maker and kind Preserver. The far greater number of those who have declared their faith, with relation to the great doctrine of particular and absolute election, have sufficiently guarded against all abuse of it; yet it has always been vilified by such as do not care to be wholly indebted to God for salvation; nothing can be more unrighteous than their charge against us; and their injustice is the more highly aggravated, because they either know, or might know, that it is entirely groundless. Whether they are so wicked, as knowingly and maliciously to misrepresent our tenets, or whether they are so foolish as to speak evil of our principles, without understanding them, is hard to determine.

2. The doctrine of free justification by the righteousness of Christ, imputed and received by faith, does not *tend* to promote licentiousness; because all who look to him as a *Priest*, dying for sin, and trust in his merit for acceptance with God, receive him in *all his offices*; and so obey him as a *Prophet*, and submit to him as a *King*.

Sinners can never appease the anger of God, by what they can perform; because all their duties are what they owe to God, as they are his creatures; and so the being found in them, is no more than paying a just debt, and cannot atone for the omission of what they are obliged to do. It was great goodness in God, when sinners could not answer for themselves, to appoint a Saviour to undertake for them, who, by fulfilling the precept of the law, and suffering the penalty which it inflicted, in case of disobedience, could atone for sin, or make propitiation for guilt, satisfy justice, appease the divine anger, magnify the law, and make it honourable, and bring in an everlasting righteousness, of infinite value; which might not only free from condemnation, but might give a right and title to the glory of heaven: and it is rich grace in God, to impute the righteousness of a Redeemer to us, that we may stand before him without shame and blushing. There can nothing be justly deduced from this, that can weaken the obligations men are

under to obey the law; certainly they are not exempted from observing it, as a rule of life, because they are delivered from the curse of it, as a broken covenant of works.

Justification, in the sight of God, is for the sake of Christ's active and passive obedience, imputed to a sinner, and received by faith; which is not from himself, but is the gift of God, and is bestowed upon him, and wrought in his heart, whenever the merit of the Redeemer is applied to him. Faith, which is created in the soul of every one who is brought to live in Christ, and to be under him, as a head of righteousness, as it is made use of, by the Holy Spirit, in justification, is wholly and only employed, in looking to Christ as a priest, dying for sin, and in trusting in the merit of his sacrifice, and which he offered up: it looks to Christ as satisfying justice, answering the demands of the law, as a covenant of works, and suffering death: it regards him as the only priest, deputed and appointed by God to save sinners, and as the only one who can carry away sin, and can appease God, by bearing the weight of infinite wrath; it respects Christ as an infinite person, one of almighty power, to go through what he undertook, and of boundless merit, to procure everlasting happiness; it beholds him in his bloody death, and in his exquisite sufferings, as enduring the utmost shame, and the most acute pain, in his body, and as suffering inexpressible torments in his soul; it flies to him for refuge, from the tempest of divine indignation; it receives him as the only Saviour; and it rests and relies upon him, for the free and full forgiveness of sin, for deliverance from condemnation, for justification before God and acceptance in his sight, and for a right and title to the favour of the Most High, and to eternal life. This is the work of faith, as it is employed in justification; but the enemies of this doctrine know well enough, that they who are advocates for the infinite merit of Christ being the sole cause of a sinner's deliverance from misery, and his being found by God in peace, maintain, that though faith, as it is used in justification, is only employed in looking to, and trusting in Christ as a priest, dying for sin, yet, with different views, it receives Christ in his other offices: it receives him as a prophet, for it assents to the truth of all the glorious doctrines which he has revealed; and it relies on him for spiritual illumination, to know more of God's will, about the duties which are to be performed by all who profess him: it likewise receives him as a king, for it submits to his authority, and obeys his commands; it follows him as he is the Captain of salvation, and it chooses him as a Sovereign, to rule in the heart, to subdue lust, and to rout the armies of indwelling corruption. Faith relies on Christ as a Priest, for justification and acceptance with God; but though this is one prime part of its work, yet this does not take in the whole notion of that grace;

it depends upon Christ as the great Prophet, who can make wise to salvation, and can lead his people into the knowledge of all truth, and can impress their hearts with a lively belief of what he is pleased to discover; and it trusts in him, as an exalted Saviour and a King, for strength, to be steadfast in the belief of the great truths revealed in Scripture, and to be zealous in the defence of them, for power to practise holiness, to proceed in the paths of piety, to renew repentance, and to engage in the great duties of mortification and self-denial; and for might to struggle against indwelling sin, to overcome the alluring temptations and the evils of the world, and to maintain a continued conflict against the powers of darkness. Though faith, as made use of in justification, does not do all this, yet this is the faith which is wrought in the hearts of all who are justified freely by grace, through the redemption purchased by Christ; and will any be so hardy, or so foolish, as to say, that this promotes licentiousness? Far otherwise; it brings a man to submit to Christ's institutions, and to rely on him for aid to perform them better than he can by his own power.

It was the design of Christ to take away the curse of the law, as it is a broken covenant of works, by becoming a curse for us, and by bearing, in our stead, all that punishment which the law denounced against us; but it never was his purpose to abrogate the law, as it is a rule of life; but rather to bring us to be more conformable to it, as it is a transcript of the holiness of God. Seeing the case is thus, we may take up the words of the apostle Paul, and may say after him: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; we rather establish the law," Rom. iii. 31. Though we ascribe justification to the righteousness of Christ, yet we leave to the law all the honour that belongs to it, as a rule of life: we own, that "we are not without law to God, but that we are under the law to Christ," 1 Cor. ix. 21. When we trust in Christ as a Surety, we look upon ourselves as under the highest obligation to obey him as our Sovereign; and when he reigns over us as a King, he gives us strength for obedience, and sends us to the law, as the rule of our conversation. We start at the thought of saying, as some do, that the law is of no use to believers, for it is of use, as a rule; and we dare not say, with others, that the moral law is repealed, and that God has placed the gospel in its room, as a new remedial law of grace, requiring faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, in the room of perfect righteousness; we cannot be pleased with such hideous and blemishing fictions concerning God, as represent him as abrogating a law that was perfect, and framing another instead of it, that admits of imperfect, though sincere obedience, as a condition of justification. Far, very far, be such thoughts from us, which reproach the faithfulness, holiness, and wisdom of God: one end he had in

saving us by Christ was, "to magnify his law, and make it honourable:" and if we are of those who are saved by Christ, we shall desire to comply with God, in this, as well as in all his other designs.

If any have been so silly as to attempt to advance faith, by disparaging good works, they are to answer for their profaneness and folly: the gospel account of faith gives no encouragement for any to do so. The Scripture supposes, that good works are as necessary to justify and show the sincerity of our faith before men, as faith in the righteousness of Christ is necessary in our justification before God. Hence the apostle James said, "Faith without works is dead, being alone; a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works: thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well, the devils believe and tremble; but wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" James ii. 17—20. If a man omits to perform those duties, which he owes to God and his neighbour, under the pretence of being justified by faith alone, he shows, that he has no more than a very imperfect notion of faith in Christ, and that what he does know of it, he perverts from its true design; unless a man evidences the sincerity of his faith by his works, all his faith is no more than that traditional historical faith, which is in the devils; and all the great things he says of it, are no more, as to himself, than mere sounds, and a bare noise. Though we are not justified by the works of the law, we must show the sincerity of our trust in the merit of that sacrifice, which Christ offered up for us, as the great High-priest of our profession, by our submitting to his righteous sceptre, as our King, and by our taking the law for the rule of our lives and actions. If so, the doctrine of justification, by the imputed righteousness of Christ, without works, does not suppose good works needless; seeing they are absolutely necessary, as evidences, though not as conditions of justification.

3. The evangelical doctrines of believers being renewed by the efficacious power and grace of the Holy Spirit, of their being kept by Christ from falling, and enabled by him to persevere to the end, and of their being favoured sometimes with the assurance of the love of God, do not lead to licentiousness; because, in the very nature of the things, it is supposed they are *new created* to holiness, that they are enabled, by strength received by Christ, to go on in the paths of godliness, and that without holiness they cannot see the Lord, either by the light of faith here, for their comfort, or in the light of glory hereafter, for their exceeding joy.

If we will believe Christ, the true and faithful Witness, sinners must be born again before they can be admitted into the

promise of God, in the world of peace and rest: he thus positively declared to Nicodemus, John iii. 3. 5. "I solemnly assure thee, except a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; except a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Regeneration is a real change, wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, in all the faculties of the soul, from sin to holiness, from practising according to the dictates of corrupt nature, to act out of a principle of faith and love to God, and from gratifying the will of the flesh, to pursue after the advancement of God's glory. It may be said to differ from conversion;\* the new birth is a spir-

\* I do not know any writer who has better stated this matter, than that great and judicious divine, Mr. Charnock: him I have chosen to follow, taking a liberty to use some of his expressions. His own words I shall here give, (see his Works, vol. ii. p. 70—72, first edition.)

"Regeneration differs from conversion: regeneration is a spiritual change, conversion is a spiritual motion: in regeneration there is a power conferred; conversion is the exercise of this power: in regeneration there is given us a principle to turn, conversion is our actual turning; that is, the principle whereby we are brought out of a state of nature, into a state of grace and conversion, the actual fixing on God, as the *terminus ad quem*; one gives *posse agere*; and the other, *actu agere*.

1. Conversion is related to regeneration, as the effect to the cause: life precedes motion, and is the cause of motion. In the covenant, *the new heart, the new spirit, and God's putting his Spirit into them*, is distinguished from their *walking in his statutes*, (Ezek. xxxvi. 27,) from the first step we take in the way of God, and is set down as the cause of our motion; *I will cause you to walk in my statutes*. In renewing us, God gives us power; in converting us, he excites that power. Men are naturally dead, and have a stone upon them; regeneration is a rolling away the stone from the heart, and a raising to newness of life; and then conversion is as natural to a regenerate man, as motion is to a living body; a principle of activity will produce action.

2. In regeneration, man is wholly passive; in conversion, he is active: as a child, in its first formation in the womb, contributes nothing to the first infusion of life, but after it has life, it is active, and its motion natural. The first reviving of us is wholly the act of God, without any concurrence of the creature; but after we are revived, we actively and voluntarily live in his sight: "He will revive us, he will raise us up, and then we shall live in his sight; then we shall walk before him, and then we shall follow on to know the Lord," Hosea vi. 2. Regeneration is the motion of God in the creature; conversion is the motion of the creature to God, by virtue of that first principle: from this principle, all the acts of believing, repenting, mortifying, quickening, spring: in all these, a man is active: in the other, he is utterly passive; all these are the acts of the will, by the assisting grace of God, after the infusion of the first grace: conversion is a giving ourselves to the Lord; giving ourselves to the Lord, is a voluntary act, but the power whereby we are enabled thus to give ourselves, is wholly and purely, in every part of it, from the Lord himself. A renewed man is said to be *led by the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 14, not *dragged*, not *forced*: the putting a bias and aptitude in the will, is the work of the Spirit quickening it; but the moving the will to God, by the strength of this bias, is voluntary, and the act of the creature.—The day of regeneration is solely the day of *God's power*, wherein he makes *men willing* to turn to him, Psal. cx. 3. So that though, in actual conversion, the creature is active, it is not from the power of man, though it is from a power in man; not growing up from the impotent root of nature, but settled there by the Spirit of God.

Regeneration differs from sanctification; habitual sanctification, indeed, is the same thing with this new creature, as habitual rectitude was the spiritual life of Adam; but actual sanctification, and the gradual progress of it, grows from this principle as a root. Faith purifies the heart, (Acts xv. 9, *purifying their hearts by*

tual change; in it there is a power to act spiritually conferred, and a principle to turn from sin infused: conversion is a spiritual motion, it is the exercise of, or putting into act the power received, and it is our actual turning. Conversion is the effect of the Spirit's new-creation work, for life precedes motion, and is the cause of it. All men, by nature, lie buried in the grave of sin; when they are regenerated, the stone is rolled away from the grave's mouth, and they are by the almighty, and consequently irresistible, power of the Spirit, raised to newness of life; and when they are made alive, conversion is natural to them, as motion is to a living body. In regeneration, man is entirely passive; in conversion he is made active. The day of the new birth, is the time of the Spirit's power being exerted on men, to make them willing to turn from sin to holiness; and therefore, though, in conversion, the renewed soul is active, yet this is not from its natural power, but from a supernatural power put forth in it, and upon it: this power of acting is not a plant in nature's garden, neither does it spring from the impotent root of the carnal will, but it is planted in the soul by the Spirit's hand, and is settled in the will, by him whose office it is, to renew the elect of God. Regeneration likewise differs from sanctification; not, indeed, from it, as it may be said to be habitual, but as it may be styled actual sanctification; for that considered as gradually progressive, grows from the new birth, as its root.

If we duly weigh this account of the work of grace in the soul of man, we shall see no reason to think that man is left at liberty to fulfil the will of the flesh, because he is new-formed by the irresistible power of the Holy Spirit. He must be said to be passive in the new birth, but what does this great change pass upon him for? That he may be active, and show that he is raised from a death in sin, by his living a life of holiness. It would be very irrational, and what would be hissed at, if any were to suggest, that a child's not contributing to his living, but being wholly indebted to God's creating power for it, is a hinderance to his performing the functions of natural life; and it is full as ridiculous to say, that a sinner's doing nothing towards new forming himself, but owing his new birth to the Holy Spirit's efficiency, is an impediment to his putting forth the subsequent acts of the spiritual life.

*faith*) and is the cause of this gradual sanctification; but faith is part of this new creature, and that which is a part, cannot be the cause of the whole, for then it would be the cause of itself. We are not regenerated by faith, though we are sanctified by faith; but we are new-created by the Spirit of God, infusing faith into us. Faith produces the acts of grace, but not the habit of grace, because it is of itself a part of this habit; for all graces are but one in the habit or new creature; charity, and likewise every other grace, is but the bubbling up of a pure heart, and a good conscience. Regeneration seems to be the life of this gradual sanctification, the health and liveliness of the soul."



If any should be so weak as to say, that being new-created and regenerated by the Spirit's efficacious operations, being turned by his almighty power from darkness to light, and from sin to holiness, and being sanctified by him, has a tendency to check persons in making a progress in the Christian course, it must be owned to be a mere folly to go about to argue with, and answer such a person. If any make this doctrine a handle to be lazy and indolent, in the performance of what is good, it is a sign that they pretend to what they know nothing of. Our spiritual life is from the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, and is not from our own wills; but then we should consider, that we are not raised from a death in sin, that we may remain inactive, and we are not made alive to righteousness, that we may indulge idleness. The Spirit enlightens our minds, renews our wills, and purifies our affections; not that we may be slothful and negligent, but that we may "be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The apostle Paul's advice was this; I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may know what is the good, the acceptable, and the perfect will of God. Abhor what is evil, cleave to what is good; be not slothful in your work, but be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11. The grace of the Holy Spirit, by which we are regenerated, we say is efficacious, irresistible, and not to be frustrated: now, can it be thought that this grace is bestowed, that we may continue inactive, as to what is good? This would be to suppose it efficacious, without accomplishing its design; irresistible, and yet defeated; not to be frustrated, and yet to be in vain. We are, by nature, in the dark grave of corruption, and we can no more raise ourselves, and bring ourselves into the light than a carcass, which has lain long in the dormitories of the earth, can throw off the clods which are heaped up over it, or unlock the door of the vault that contains it; and we are dead in trespasses and sins, and can no more put forth the acts of a new life, than the shattered parts of a body reduced to dust, can reunite and regain an union with the immortal soul. It is the Spirit, who, when we lie buried in corruption, and are dead in sins, quickens us, and effectually says, *Arise, awake, come forth, and shine, for Christ will give you life*; and his end in doing this is, that *we may walk as children of the light, and may act wisely and circumspectly*. The apostolic doctrine was as follows; "You were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord; walk as children of the light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." It is said, "Wake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead,

and Christ shall give thee life." See then "that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as those who are wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil," Eph. v. 7—9, 11, 14—16. It is the Spirit's design in giving us life, that we may show we are alive, by acting with diligence, caution, wisdom, and circumspection, in avoiding all things which are of a sinful and mean nature, and by pursuing after those things which are good and commendable; so that the doctrine of our regeneration and conversion being owing to his efficacious and irresistible grace, can never countenance laziness or looseness.

We grow in grace, and persevere by virtue of strength derived from Christ. He who was truth itself, declared, that without his aid, we can never proceed, when he said to his disciples: "You cannot bear fruit, unless you abide in me: I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing," John xv. 4, 5. We can do nothing which is good, unless we derive strength from Christ, by virtue of our union with him; but it would be odd, if it was to follow, that we must do nothing, because we are in Christ, and are upheld and nourished by him. We must wait on Christ, or trust in him for persevering vigour; and, if we expect aid from him, we must be in a watchful posture; then it will be with us, according to what is promised to such as rely on Christ, in Isaiah's prophecy: "The youths shall faint, and be weary; and the vigorous young men shall utterly fail: but such as wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with the wings of eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint," Isa. xl. 30, 31. Such as depend on their own strength, shall soon faint and tire, and die, if they are left to themselves; but such as wait upon Christ, such as rely upon his power, will renew their strength. When they do this, it is not that they may lie down and sleep by the way, but that they may be active and industrious in duty, that they may mount up towards heaven, with a towering sprightly motion; such as is that of the lively eagle when scorning the ground, she soars aloft; that they may run in the paths of duty, which are truly the paths of honour, without being weary, or being obliged to drop for want of spirits; that they may refresh themselves with continued walks within the sacred inclosures of pure religion, where are the most refined pleasures, without being faint, or being forced to sit down tired, without a prospect of being able to recruit their vigour. If we are once ingrafted into Christ, we shall go on in his strength, in the way of holiness, and we shall be kept by his power, so that we shall never totally or finally fall from grace; of this he himself assured us when he said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never

perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand," John x. 27, 28. This does not excuse us from keeping up a constant watch against the motions of indwelling corruption, and the temptations of the infernal powers; for if we lay aside our guard, we may fall into sin, and so provoke our beloved and our friend, to withdraw himself and be gone, and then our feet will stumble on the dark mountains of desponding thoughts and distrusting fears. The sure encouragement we have to hope that we shall be kept by the power of Christ, through faith to complete salvation, is far from giving a license to carelessness and indolence; we may, indeed, wickedly make it a handle for these; but then, if we belong to God, we expose ourselves to the smart of his fatherly rebukes. Trust in Christ's power, is a grace of an active nature; and, if we go on in his strength, it must be in a way of holiness: therefore a lively faith, instead of making us lazy, will put us upon being "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" and the more, "because we know that our labour of love shall never be in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58.

If they who trust in Christ for righteousness and life, are favoured by the Holy Spirit, with an assurance of their having a share in the love of the Redeemer, this has a tendency to make them more fervent and active in true obedience, and so does not promote licentiousness. Assurance of salvation is a deep sense and a lively taste of the divine love, joined with a firm persuasion of Christ's good will to us, whereby we are enabled to look back on what we are by grace, and to see that God is our Father, that Christ is our Redeemer, and that he will save us with an everlasting salvation: this presupposes faith, and cannot be without it; but it is not essential to true faith at all times, but it is bestowed in a way of sovereignty. Assurance is from the Holy Spirit; and in giving it to a Christian, he affords him a true insight into the treasures of the grace of God, and the love of Christ; he enables a child of God to plead his adoption, with a filial confidence; for we are told, Gal. iv. 6, that because we are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, enabling us to cry, *Abba, Father.*" he witnesses with the spirit of a saint; for we are informed, Rom. viii. 16, that "the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God:" and he seals up, to a believer, his interest in the love of God, and in the earnest of the heavenly inheritance: for it is declared, 2 Cor. i. 13, 14, 22. Eph. iv. 30. 2 Cor. v. 5, that "by the Holy Spirit, who is the earnest of our inheritance, we are sealed to the day of redemption." The assurance of salvation, which is from the witnessing and sealing of the Spirit, makes us more holy. It cannot be thought, that he who is infinitely pure, will, or can encourage looseness; where he takes up his abode, there must be much

faith and love, humility and fear, self-denial and uprightness, holiness and purity, circumspection and watchfulness. Such therefore, as boast of assurance, and yet can take their swing in sin, are only vain and impudent pretenders. Assurance sets the Christian's graces in a clear light, and checks every thing contrary to God; and, as it is the earnest of heaven, it will make all who are blessed with it more heavenly, and consequently more holy. When it is thus with believers, fervour and vehemence, zeal and courage, love and patience, will fill their breasts; and, inspired with heavenly vigour, they will pass on from strength to strength, till they set their feet on the eternal hills, where they shall know faintness and weariness no more. The Scripture has sufficiently guarded us against abusing the gospel doctrine of assurance. The apostle Paul has showed us, what improvement we ought to make of assurance of God's love in the following passages, Rom. xiii. 11. 14. Eph. iv. 29—32. 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Knowing the season, that now it is high time for us to wake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed: the night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light; let us walk decently as in the day, not in revels and carousals, not in sleep and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put you on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no carnal provision for lusts: Let no corrupt word come out of your mouth, but what is good, to edify profitably, that it may minister grace to the hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption: let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice, be thrust from you; and be you gentle one to another, tender-hearted, and ready to do acts of kindness, as God in Christ has been gracious to you. Be steadfast, immovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, seeing you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The great apostle John, when he had spoken of the hope and assurance which believers have, that when they come to be for ever with the Lord, they shall possess joys ineffably great, and pleasures which in this state of imperfection they cannot fully know, inferred, that they should purify themselves, as Christ is pure; or that they should strive to be as like their glorified Head, as is possible, before they put off the body of sin and death: his words are, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: and every man that hath this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure." We must judge of the tendency of assurance of God's love by what the apostles of our Lord have said concerning it, who had large degrees of it; they declared, that it is a motive to

holiness. If any then prate about their assurance, who are presumptuous sinners, we must look upon them to be either frontless liars, or else wild giddy-headed creatures, who take the freaks of enthusiasm to be the Holy Spirit's motions.

4. Eternal *blessedness*, or the heavenly glory, is the gift of grace, and the reward of *Christ's death*, and is not owing to our good works, either in the whole or in part: but this does not tend to promote licentiousness, because "without holiness we can never see the Lord,"\* or have a meetness and fitness for heaven.

The Scripture has required us to follow after holiness, and has positively declared, that without it we can never see the Lord. The apostle Paul's injunction is this, Heb. xiii. 14. "Follow holiness, without which none can see the Lord." Indeed, all wicked men will see God in one sense; but how will it be? They will see him in the glittering armour of his justice, in the power of his anger, in the consuming fire of his indignation, exalted on a terrible judgment-seat, to pass sentence upon them, clothed with thunder, and wielding a sword of vengeance, to cut them in pieces: this will be a sad sight of him. All unholy persons shall see God, but not so as to enjoy any good by him; a cloud of thick darkness never to be removed, shall for ever interpose between them, and all that is pleasing and delightful in God; and they shall see nothing of him, but what will be matter of the greatest terror to them.

Without holiness, no one can have a well grounded hope of heaven. Heaven is the inheritance of all believers, not by a natural right in themselves, but by God's free gift, through Christ; but though it is a free gift through Christ, yet none can conclude he has a title to it without holiness; or say, it is his, before he has something wrought in him to prove it so. A man must have some ground for his faith, else it is presumption; and he must have some reason for his hope, otherwise it is ridiculous, and a mere delusion. There is no taking of heaven by force for sinners. In one sense, Mat. xi. 12, indeed, there is a taking of heaven by violence; holy souls, filled with zeal and ardour, and inflamed with earnest desires, take heaven by force; but it is by weapons of God's providing: they win their way, but it is by Christ's aid; and they do marvellous things, but it is by the Holy Spirit's help; and they reap the spoils of the victory, which the Redeemer has obtained for them. Unholy men can never scale the battlements of heaven, for they have no strength of their own to do it; and not only the frowning cherub, with the flaming sword, guards the avenues to it, but an angry God stands their irreconcilable enemy, to keep

\* The reader may see most of the topics, which are briefly mentioned under this head, largely insisted on, by the excellent Mr. Charnock, on the necessity of Regeneration, p. 36—44, in the second volume of his works.

them out. Holiness is the indelible character which Christ sets upon all that are his; without this, we may have a delusive irrational hope of heaven, but it will greatly injure us, and can never help us. A false hope in a sinner renders all admonitions unsuccessful; and, till his vain confidence is shaken, he will not believe he needs conversion. An ill-grounded hope is the great engine of the devil to destroy souls, and it is worse than no expectation; for they will, of all men, be most miserable, who expect to be saved, and yet, when the breath has left their bodies, find themselves damned. When the wicked amuse themselves with vain expectations, the arrow of death strikes them to the heart, and makes an end of them before it is feared, and their hope is disappointed by the king of terrors. They who are strangers to holiness, have but few thoughts about their eternal state, and seldom consider what will become of them when they die; and, if they are forced to hear of their mortality, they please themselves with slight apprehensions of God, as a Being of all mercy: but, alas! when their souls go out of their bodies, the devil, who is the harbinger of misery, will drag them to the seats of darkness, where they will be prisoners without hope for ever. What will it profit men, if they fancy they shall go to heaven, if they wake, after they have slept the sleep of death, lying in the bowels of hell, with sights of wo before their eyes, and inexpressible horror in their minds? None should say they hope for heaven, if they are not holy; for without holiness they can have no proof of their title to it.

Except we are made holy, we have no meetness for the inheritance which is undefiled and incorruptible. We shall never be admitted to set one foot within the pure realms above, if we are not adorned with real sanctity. The righteousness of Christ is the clothing which covers our defects; and the garments of holiness, which are put upon all who are justified, are the array which beautifies and adorns them: when this attire is put on here, a blessed glorious immortality is the raiment laid up for us, in the wardrobe of heaven. Death itself, as it is a simple disunion of the soul from the body, is not extremely terrible to some considerate believers; they see nothing in this world to court their stay, or to monopolize and chain their affections; and they behold nothing in death, as it is merely the pulling down, and shattering their old house, to deject and fill them with terror: to go out of the body is no insuperable difficulty to them, but all their concern is, lest, when their souls are stripped of their clayey covering, they shall be found unclothed; this, at times, sinks their spirits, and awakes their fears. The language of a pious soul is this; "I am not unwilling to leave this life, and to be absent from the body; but I am not without concern, lest, when I am unclothed, my trembling soul should

be found naked, and without a covering." We must be clothed with the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness; and we must be adorned with the grace of sanctification, otherwise we can never enter into the holy place, not made with hands: the oil of gladness will not be poured into our souls, unless our hearts are first seasoned with grace: and our spirits must be purified from all sinful imperfections, before we can inherit the glory of that blessed country, where there will be no place for what is imperfect and in part.

Without holiness, none can do the work of heaven, or perform the duties required there. One part of the work of heaven is to behold the glorious face of God, and to stand continually before him. What are the morning stars, and the spirits of just men made perfect, doing in heaven? Are they not taken up in viewing the perfections and excellencies of God, and in admiring his attributes; such as his wisdom, power, truth, goodness, and especially his love to sinners. But what could unholy persons do there? They will not now give God any entertainment in their thoughts: and, as they have no intellectual eyes to behold his glory, so they are not fit to come into his presence; they are neither acquitted from their guilt, nor cleansed from their pollution; how then can they stand before the pure unspotted Majesty of God, who cannot look upon sin without the highest indignation, and the severest hatred? Praise is a principal work to be performed in the happy world above; this is what the saints offer to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb who redeemed sinners by his blood, with the highest strains of holy rapture. It will be their constant work to fall down before the throne, and to sing the praises of the divine persons, with the most raised and pure affections; and it will be the fulness of their joy to sound forth hallelujahs for ever. Now, men void of holiness have no inclination to praise the Most High; can they rejoice that God reigns, and has a dominion of which there is no end, when they are only set upon rebellion against him? Can they shout for joy, that he has a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and that he is exalted above all things, when they are inclined stubbornly to spurn at his authority? Can they compass his royal seat with songs of melody, when they would, if they were able, thrust him from his throne? Can they follow him with cheerful acclamations, when they are for setting their mouths against him? Can they extol his honour, when they delight to reproach his sacred name? It would be against all sense and reason to say, that without holiness any could compass the throne of God, in heaven, with anthems of praise. The putting forth of perfect love, and unconfined affections to God, is a work of heaven. The apostle Paul has told us thus, 1 Cor. xiii. 8—10, "Love never fails; as to other things, whether they are prophecies,

they shall fail; or tongues, they shall cease; or knowledge, it shall vanish away; for we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but as soon as that which is perfect shall come, what is in part shall be done away." Prophecies, or gifts of explaining Scripture, shall fail; tongues, or an ability of expressing the inward conceptions of the mind, in different languages, shall cease; and the knowledge of spiritual things, which we gather up from tedious methods of reasoning, and by framing in our minds such apprehensions of divine truths, as hold up some analogy to sensible objects, shall vanish and pass away, and give place to what is clear, easy, certain, and void of all mistakes; but love to God never fails, it will continue for ever. What is this love in its perfection but the gratitude of heavenly spirits to God, their benefactor, who is superlatively excellent, predominantly sweet, infinitely blessed, and supremely amiable in himself? This love of souls to God in heaven, is without all weakness, mixtures, damps, and pull-backs; it twists and binds them to God, all the selfishness of their wills is lost, and they are entirely resigned to his will. Now, is not this incompatible with an unholy disposition? Can they be united to God, who hate him, and refuse subjection to his laws all the time they are here? Can they clasp about him, as the chiefest good hereafter, who prefer the very dust of the earth before him in this life? Certainly not; none can act any grace, in its perfection, in heaven, which he has not, in its root and principle, on earth; every grace will be perfected in heaven, but no new grace is begun there. Can carnal sinners have ardent love to God, and cleave to him when their affections are set against him? Can they find a predominant delight in him, when their hatred against him is blown up to the highest pitch? Can they have pleasure in his holiness, when their souls are full of burning lusts? We must not so far deny our reason, as to say that men can both love and hate God, both obey and oppose him, both find sweetness in him and invidiously rise up against him, both take delight in his holiness, and feel pleasure in sin. If men have no satisfaction in meditating on God, and in conversing with him in their thoughts, now, when he is distant, and removed out of their sight, they would take no delight in him, if they were brought to stand before the presence of his glory, and to behold the brightness of his face in the country of vision above.

Without holiness, none can relish the enjoyments of heaven. A corrupt man, with a sea of sin rolling and tossing in his breast, would find no rest or pleasure in heaven, if we could suppose he was carried thither. He would find no sweetness in communion with God, who is the source of all the happiness enjoyed in the other world. It is the presence of God that makes heaven a place of delight; but he would be at everlasting vari-



ance with him. One who is not sanctified, could never suit himself to the company of heaven; he would find no joy in the society of saints and angels, against whom he has the greatest antipathy. Were he admitted into heaven, where the saints sit with their wedding garments on, as they would be a burden to him, so he would disturb their joys, and damp that cheerful fire of love, which flames in their innocent breasts. The impure sinner cannot be regaled with the perfect pleasures of heaven, because there is no agreement between them and his prevailing frame; heaven is full of rational and sublime delights, but none can enjoy them, till they are made meet for them by sanctification. Therefore the old depraved nature must be done away, or else men must be for ever separated from God himself; they must, without possibility of admission, be shut out of the society of saints and angels, and they must be deprived of joys substantial and real. God will not leave heaven to take sinners into it; he will not destroy the comfort of the princes of light, and the spirits of just men made perfect, by bringing impure creatures to interrupt their sweet fellowship; and he will not convert the holy recreations of the upper world into imperfection, to suit the gust of sordid transgressors. If these things are duly weighed, it will appear, that a man must be made holy before he can see or enter into the kingdom of God; and if so, then there is no encouragement given to licentiousness; though it is affirmed, that everlasting blessedness is from the grace of God, and is the reward of Christ's obedience, and is not owing to the holiness of men.

#### APPLICATION.

We see that the glorious doctrine of man's salvation being from the free grace of God, as manifested in and through Christ, has not the least tendency in its own nature, to promote looseness of life; but, on the contrary, to enforce strictness and holiness in the conversation: let us then, if we assent to it, be careful not to abuse it, misrepresent it, or pervert it from its true design and real drift; but let us earnestly endeavour to be a credit to it, and to adorn the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, by a regular and well ordered conversation. The generation of blind, legal, formal professors, who are too significant in their own esteem to acknowledge, that the whole of their salvation is owing to free grace, and who will ever be looking for something in themselves, to render them worthy of, or at least qualified for the favour of God, will always be cavilling against the true evangelical doctrine, as if it encouraged looseness, and slandering it, as if it opened a door to Antinomian errors. Let us, then, not only endeavour to be furnished with arguments, to refute them, and to vindicate the glorious gospel

of the blessed God from their vile calumnies; but let us, in the strength of Christ, live down their objections, and show, by the whole tenor of our conversation, that the grace of God is not an unoperating thing; that it does not indulge those who are the subjects of it in laziness and indolence, much less in looseness and impurity; but that it puts them upon bringing honour to it, by a pious, pure, honest, and prudent walk. Let us shape our course by those words of the apostle Paul, wherein he has set this matter in a very beautiful light; which, as they are a noble account of the genuine tendency of the doctrine of free grace, so they contain a sure directory to all that have embraced the gospel of peace: they have been produced above, but they cannot be repeated too often: "The grace of God, which brings salvation, has appeared to all men, teaching them that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and piously, in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, even the glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 11—14.

If we would manifest, that we are partakers of divine grace, and are in a state of salvation; if we would with comfort look for the second appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and expect that as matter of blessed hope, which will be to the terror of the unbelievers and the ungodly; and if we would comply with his design, in giving himself for us, and answer his end in redeeming us to himself, then let us be *afraid of all iniquity*, fly the least appearance of evil, and hate the garments spotted with the flesh; let us deny all ungodliness, renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, and forsake the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind; and let us be zealous for good works, diligent to obey the law, and careful to behave piously towards God, act honestly, and live temperately: unless we do this, all our big words about the grace of God, are but swelling words of vanity, our hope is but groundless, and we endeavour to thwart Christ's design in redeeming men. Let us then evidence that we are the elect of God, and predestinated by him to salvation, that we are redeemed by Christ, and justified by his righteousness, that we are converted by the Holy Spirit, and are his workmanship, and that we have good hope of heaven through grace, and are the expectants of a blessed immortality, by our holy, righteous, pure, and prudent behaviour.

Let us *stand at the greatest distance from all sin*: whatever we are convinced is forbidden by God, in his holy law, let us start from: let us forsake the lusts of the flesh, or avoid all open and scandalous disorders; but let us not be content with this, lest we should be only like whited tombs, which make a fair show without, but within are full of rottenness and cor-

ruption; let us, at the same time that we mortify the desires of the flesh, crucify the imperious and dangerous lusts of the mind; let us not give way to pride, malice, envy, hatred, and self-seeking: when in many things we all offend, let us not entertain light thoughts of sin, much less give way to transgress presumptuously; let us be deeply humbled, that we so often provoke the Most High, by sinning in thought, in word, and in deed; let us hate and abhor sin, and look upon it to be most abominable, because it is odious to a God of infinite goodness, occasioned the groans, agonies, and death of a kind Saviour, and tends to bring ruin on our immortal souls; let us condemn ourselves, that we have committed what is of so hurtful a nature; let us be filled with godly sorrow for sin, and take a holy revenge upon it; let us, by the help of the Spirit, turn from it to God; and, as we sin daily, let us delight to renew our work of repentance every day we live: let us never comply with any thing which is evil, which a corrupt age has made customary, but let us take pleasure in that singularity, which is commendable, which is to stand off from every thing that has a tendency to dishonour God, to wound the peace of our own consciences, and to discredit that pure religion which we profess.

Let us *practice all moral duties*, and *Christian graces*; let us act justly, warily, and honestly in our dealings with men; let us make conscience to perform all our promises, to make good all our engagements, and to be faithful to every trust committed to us: let us be temperate in our using the things which are appointed for the support and comfort of life; moderate in our pursuit of the world, and wary and careful to provide things honest in the sight of all men; let us be humble in our carriage and deportment, and be amiable in our behaviour; let us be even in our temper, if we are compassed about with prosperity, patient in adversity, in bearing ill treatment, and enduring insults, and ready to forgive all personal injuries; let us be resigned to the will of God, whatever condition of life he may involve us in, and desire, in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content; let us love mercy, and be ready to show pity to any in distress; let us relieve the wants of others, as we are able, and do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith: let us show benevolence to all mankind, even to those whose principles and practices we may most detest; and let us not oppress any, if we have it in our power: let us show great love to our Christian brethren, and manifest true affection to all who are children of the same Father, professors of the same faith, and travellers to the same land of rest.

Let us make conscience to *act with sincere piety towards God*; let us receive the important truths which he has revealed in his word, and, with zeal regulated by knowledge, hold them

fast, when they are denied and contested, by such as are strangers to the wisdom which is from above; let us stand up for all that tends to secure the honour of free grace, to exalt Christ, and to promote holiness, and keep our loyalty, our Faith, and love to the King of Zion, the Captain of our salvation; let us search the Scriptures, and inform ourselves about the mind and will of our heavenly Father; let us walk in all the ordinances and institutions of the Most High, blameless; and be careful to perform the duties we owe immediately to God, and pay the worship which he requires; let us be frequent in meditation, and constant in prayer, and engage in the several parts of worship required of us, in due place and proper season; let us not omit private religion, and let us keep ourselves from the view of men, in secret duties, as much as possible; let us take care that the voice of prayer is heard in our families, and the morning and evening sacrifice of praise is offered up in our houses; let us keep holy the day of the Son of man, and not forsake the assembling of ourselves for the public worship of God upon it; let us delight to offer up social worship to our God and our King, and to join with others in compassing his altar with our supplications, and to attend on his word preached, and hear the joyful sound; let us, if we are in church-fellowship, keep our solemn vows, honour them who have the rule over us, and speak to us the word of life, watch over one another, and celebrate the supper of our Lord, remembering his death with faith, love, thankfulness, godly sorrow, and holy joy; let us labour to engage in that ordinance, and in all the parts of worship, with life and vigour, with circumspection and fervour, and without formality and deadness, without slightness and unconcernedness, that so the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, may be pleasing to that God whom we serve.

When we do the things mentioned, let us not give way to the *insolent vanity* of thinking to make *God our debtor*, or to *purchase heaven*; but, when we have done most, let us be ready to own, that we are unprofitable servants, in having done no more than our duty, and that we are, in part, unfaithful servants, as we omit many things, we are obliged to; let us, in all we do, whether of a moral, civil, or religious nature, act from a principle of love to God, with a regard to the rule which he has given us, in his word, and with a sincere desire to advance his glory, whose we are, and to whom we are indebted for all the blessings pertaining to life and godliness; let us, under a sense of our weakness and ignorance, be frequently applying ourselves, by prayer, to the God of all grace, that he would bring us to know our duty, and would enable us constantly to perform it, that so we may credit religion, and may adorn the profession we make of his name, as well as expect salvation as the gift of grace, and the reward of Christ's purchase.

Let us, at the same time that we renounce all confidence in the flesh, and cast aside all trust in our own performances, *rely on Christ for assistance* to keep the faith, to run our race, and to fight the good fight; let us determine, that in Jesus, who is the Lord Jehovah, our Saviour and our God, we will have strength, as well as righteousness; let us comfort ourselves with considering that he is unchangeable in his truth, to make good his promises, that he is ever present with us, to guard us, that he knows all our wants, and is infinite in wisdom, to order all things for our good, that he is almighty in power, to defend us against enemies, and to finish his own work in us, and that he is boundless in goodness, mercy, and compassion, to bestow upon us all things that tend to our happiness and well-being: having such a glorious Captain of salvation, and such a powerful Leader, to the peaceful provinces of immortality, let us go through the wilderness of this world, leaning upon him our beloved and our friend; and we need not fear but that he will enable us to act as becomes the gospel, and to bring credit to the doctrine of grace, which we profess, by doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly and piously with our God; and then "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory:" and, as the sincere followers of the Lamb, shall sit together with him in heavenly places; where crowns of glory will circle our brows, and palms of victory will grace our hands; where the white attire of innocence will deck us, and the glittering array of light will adorn us; and where pleasures, grown to full perfection, will always regale us, and joys, substantial and sincere, will to eternity delight us.

To the Father of mercies, who, out of his sovereign pleasure, chose us to salvation, before the foundation of the world, that we might be holy and blameless before him in love; to the Son, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and to the Holy Spirit, who changes the whole frame of our minds, that we may walk in newness of life; to these three divine Persons, but the one supreme God, whom we adore, be honour, praise, and glory, in all the churches, now, henceforth, and for ever more. Amen.

AN  
HUMBLE AND IMPARTIAL INQUIRY  
INTO THE CAUSES OF THE  
DECAY OF PRACTICAL RELIGION;  
OR INTO THE  
TRUE GROUNDS OF THE DECLENSIONS AS TO THE LIFE AND  
POWER OF GODLINESS, VISIBLE IN SUCH AS  
PROFESS IT IN THE PRESENT DAY.

By MR. ABRAHAM TAYLOR,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

REVELATION iii. 1—3.—To the angel of the church at Sardis write, These things says he who has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead: be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die; for I have not found thy works upright before God: remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the sole King in his church; and no single man, nor any collective bodies of men, should, on any pretence, usurp his power. What doctrines he has seen fit to reveal, are to be received on his authority, though they may not come wholly within the grasp of our finite understandings: the worship which he has judged proper to prescribe, must be religiously kept to, though it may not, for want of pomp and pageantry, be pleasing to the flesh; and the duties of practical godliness, which he has declared are to be performed by all his followers, must not be neglected, though they may be difficult to be observed. When men inculcate doctrines, which Christ never revealed, they offer him a high affront; when they prescribe methods of worship, which he never commanded, they, with daring insolence, encroach on his prerogative; and when they enjoin austerities, which he never required, they set their wisdom above his. On the other hand, when men take upon them to bring persons off from regarding the great mysteries of the gospel, which the true and faithful Witness has made known, under the pretence that they are abstruse speculations, matters of dispute, and things which tend to shut out charity, the greatest of all graces, they break their allegiance to Christ, and go

about sacrilegiously to rob his followers of the sacred treasure of faith; when any refuse to be found engaged in the worship which the King of Zion has appointed, they cast contempt on him and declare they will not walk within the sacred inclosures which he has placed about his church; and when any neglect that internal and external purity, which the holy and the just One has required, they show they have no part or interest in him. If a professing people are zealous for the truths of the gospel, if they are careful to regulate their worship by the pattern given in the word, and if they abound in the works of righteousness, and shine in the beauties of holiness, it may be said that the glory of Christ resides among them, and that their blessings will be crowned with a desirable increase; but if they are lukewarm and indifferent, as to the great truths of the gospel, if they are negligent in attending on the worship appointed by their great Prophet and King, and if they act dissolutely, and, instead of denying themselves, symbolize with the profane world, it may be said of them, that their beauty is tarnished, that gray hairs, the tokens of spiritual decay, are upon them, and the glory is upon the departure. When it is thus, they provoke Christ, by their sordid ingratitude, to remove their candlestick out of its place, unless they repent, they grieve the Holy Spirit, and he withdraws himself, as to his comforting presence, and as to his accompanying ordinances with his efficacious power, so that they are given up to a lifeless formality; and though by their continuing to make a profession, they have a name to live, yet, in reality, there is a death upon their comforts, and they do not act with that vigour in serving Christ, which becomes persons which are alive.

In the chapter from whence the words are taken, and in that preceding, the beloved disciple John, the last survivor of the apostles, has set down the letters which his exalted Master directed him to write to seven famous churches of the provincial Asia. His life was lengthened out far beyond any of the other companions of the Lord; and when he was advancing towards a hundred years, he was, in the second persecution raised by Domitian, banished into Patmos, a lonely island in the Archipelago; where, being retired on a Lord's day for meditation, his exalted Master, who had for many years been out of the sight of his bodily eyes, was pleased to appear to him, in a very magnificent and glorious form, and audibly to proclaim himself the sole Head and King of the church, and to dictate to him seven short epistles, to be sent to the seven principal churches of the province of Asia, to rouse such as were under declensions, and to encourage such as were true to his cause and interest. When he returned from exile, under Nerva, he committed this book to writing, for the use of all the churches.

It has been matter of warm contest for some years, among our brethren in the United Provinces, whether these epistles are to be understood, as having only a literal reference to the seven churches, which were in Asia, or whether they were a prophetic representation of what was to fall out in the Christian churches, to the end of time, in seven periods; and it must be owned, that this controversy has been carried on with so much heat, especially by the followers of the learned Cocceius, who are for the prophetic sense, that it has made great inroads on brotherly love, and has taken up many able and excellent pens, which might have been employed in matters of greater importance. I will not take upon me peremptorily to determine which party have best hit the mind and will of the Holy Spirit;\* I must, however, just hint, that a great difficulty sticks with me, with relation to the supposition, that these epistles contain an account of the Christian church, under seven periods, till the end of all things; and that is, the church is only represented, either in a suffering, or in a declining condition; but there is nothing said of that glorious state of it, which we, from the Scriptures, believe, will be before the end of time: I cannot but think, if this had been designed as a representation of the state of the Christian church, in seven scenes, till the consummation of all things, we should have had something said of the glory of the latter days, which some of our brethren, who are for the doctrine of seven periods, allow, as well as others.

The words which I have chosen for the subject of present meditation, are part of the letter written to the church at Sardis. Christ began with setting forth his own prerogative; he has the seven Spirits, or he distributes the various operations of his Spirit as he pleases, and makes a more plentiful effusion at one time than another; he has the seven stars, or he overrules and directs, all the ministers in his church, and they are accountable to him. He declared his omniscience when he said, *I know thy works*; he judged not by appearance, because he is the searcher of hearts. He described the members of the church at Sardis, to be in a very declining condition, to have a name to live, but, in reality to have so little life left, that it might be said, they were dead in spiritual declensions; and he has told us, that he found not their works perfect or upright with God; or that he saw too much formality and hypocrisy among them: he warned them of their danger, commanded them to be watchful, to strengthen what was left, which was commendable, which was

\* The reader may see this matter discussed by two very learned men, M. Witius, (Vid. Misc. Sac. Vol. 1. lib. 3.) and M. A. Marck, who, I hear, has newly entered into his Master's joy, (Pref. ad com. in Apoc.) See also the very learned M. Vitringa's Commentary, who, though not a professed Cocceian, here falls in with the prophetic sense.



ready to expire; to call to mind, and hold fast, the truths they had received and heard, and to repent of their backslidings: and he added a severe threat, in case they were regardless of his admonitions, that he would visit them in a way of severity; and that suddenly, when they might least fear his coming, he would act as a swift witness against them. It has been observed, that it does not appear, from what is here mentioned, that the faith which they professed was chargeable with errors, or that their worship was sullied with superstition; but as there does not seem to be any advantage resulting from such an observation, it is rather probable, from their being commanded to hold fast what they had heard, and learned, that they were declining in zeal for the doctrines of the gospel, as well as that practical religion was at a low ebb, and almost ready to expire among them.

We may allow, as indeed it seems to be the justest account of the matter, that these epistles had a literal reference to the churches then in Asia, which were over-run with the Gnostics and Nicolaitans, who denied the union of the divine and human nature in Christ; maintained that equivocation and occasional conformity to the heathen ceremonies were lawful; and abused the doctrine of grace, to the encouraging of loose practices. However, seeing all that is written in Scripture is recorded for our learning and use, we, in these after ages, may compare ourselves with the more ancient churches, and may expect, that if we are like them, the threatenings which were denounced against them, may be understood to be in some measure levelled against us. We may not have the same errors started now as were disseminated in the Asiatic churches; neither may the same deviations from that holiness, which is required in all that embrace the gospel, be found among us, as were to be met with in them. However, if our errors in doctrine are as pernicious, though of a different sort; and our deeds, though running in another channel, are as bad, we must own that we have a name to live, but are dead; and we may suppose, that Christ commands us to be watchful, to strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die; and to remember, and hold fast, what we have learned, and repent; lest he visit us in the way of his judgments, when we least expect it.

I. I shall briefly set forth what is the *state of religion* among us.

I shall not concern myself with those who are of the National establishment, nor with those who are pretty much of our sentiments, in the countries under the same civil government with us; but I shall confine myself to such as take the title of *English Protestant Dissenters*. And here no words can be too full of emphasis to set forth our condition; nay, words are wanting, to show how we have *fallen from our*

*first love.* A zeal for the honour of Christ, an ardent concern for exalting the glory of the free grace of God, in contriving and executing our salvation, a desire to have the fallen creature depressed, and to have works of any sort excluded from contributing to salvation, and a care to abound in holiness, and to promote practical religion in the closet, in the family, and in the public, were formerly the glories of our cause, and were the noble badges and amiable marks of the generality of them, who deprived themselves of many worldly emoluments, that they might not prostitute their consciences, by complying with what they judged to be disagreeable to the Scripture rule. While they thus held fast their integrity, they were greatly honoured of God; they were mighty in word, they were powerful in prayer; the work of conversion was successfully carried on, and many, who had a good disposition wrought in them, flocked into churches; then were seen the evident signals of the Holy Spirit's presence; and great strictness was kept up among those who made a religious profession. These things we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us; and some survive, who have a remembrance how matters formerly stood among us, whilst we were under the disadvantages of penal laws, and had the powers of the earth engaged against us, and had none to protect us, in the enjoyment of the rights, which belonged to us, as men and Christians. At last, it pleased God to loose our bands, and to set our feet in a large place; but, how are we altered for the worse, since we enjoyed our liberties? The first abuse of our freedom was, to relinquish the ancient, as well as genuine Christian doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ; to deny the perfection of the moral law, and to substitute a pretended law of grace, which required sincere obedience, instead of perfect righteousness; this was accompanied with a decay of practical religion, and we have since been gradually declining, till now; and it may be said of us, that we have run the utmost length in error, and have taken the greatest compass in sin. When we compare the present state of religion among us, with what it was formerly, we may say, how are we fallen from our first estate! how are we cut down to the ground! how is our zeal turned into lukewarmness, and our circumspection into dissoluteness! Slight thoughts of the Christian revelation abound, so that infidelity is almost ready to prevail; error was never more rampant than it now is; private, family, and public worship, were never more neglected; and covetousness, pride, self-conceit, and licentiousness, never more abounded.

It may not seem likely, that the charge of Atheism can be brought against such as profess religion; and it must be owned, that none are so hardy as to deny the being of a God, who do not cast off all restraints of profession; but some have gone

so far as to assert, that there are moral fitnesses, with regard to human actions, previous in nature to the will of God. This, whatever they may think, or however they may endeavour to fortify themselves with plausible, though unintelligible sentences, is to set up a system of morality without God at the head of it. They pretend, that there is not any obligation previous to the will of God, but only in order of nature; but yet that the obligation to obedience necessarily results from the nature of things, though some of the particular instances, and trials of this obedience, may depend entirely on the will of God; and that there are eternal and unchangeable fitnesses in things from which only we can be certain of the unchangeableness of God in his purposes, and promises, and government of the world. If this has not a tendency to introduce the exploded and unintelligible jargon of an eternal and unchangeable fate by which the purposes of the supreme God are confined, which was the hideous representation of this matter, among the heathen, it is hard to say when one thing is like another. These are the unworthy representations which are given us of God, and of the foundations of morality; this is setting some unintelligible principle, as moral fitness, the reason of things, or the like, above God, which is a great advance towards Atheism, and can have no other effect than making men think there is no need of a God to govern the world. Many, who call themselves Christians now, will scarce allow that we are accountable to God; and many, who say the Bible is their religion, eagerly contend, that natural religion, or reason, is a sufficient rule for men to walk by.

As to the *doctrines* contained in Scripture, they are almost all now struck out of the list of articles of faith; error may truly be said to come in like a flood, and to spread itself like a raging torrent; we may cry out, "The floods have lifted up their voice, the floods have lifted up their waves." Most of the pernicious errors which have formerly been brought into the church, are eagerly embraced in our unhappy times; the enemies have, for some years, been endeavouring to rob Christ and the Holy Spirit of the glory of their supreme divinity, and to reduce them to the rank of creatures: and now men grow bolder in error; they are forward to deny their personality, and to make them only attributes, powers, and names of the Father. God's election of his people to glory is arraigned as unreasonable; and his sovereignty is, in the most saucy manner, opposed. The fall of man is entirely forgotten, and his original corruption is eagerly denied and exploded; and his death is said to be what must, according to the necessity of nature, have fallen out. Justification by righteousness, is a point pursued with rancour and malice; and sincerity, though in an error, is given out to be a sufficient title to God's favour. Preaching Christ in his

person, offices, and in the merits of his death, undergoes the persecution of cruel mockings; and is spoken of, by brain-sick novices, only with a sneer. The efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit, and his sanctifying and comforting influences, are rudely blasphemed as enthusiasm; and the power of man, to convert himself, and to answer the ends of his living in the world, is eagerly contended for; though those who plead for this power, show that if they have it, it may be in them, without being put into act. The perseverance of the saints in holiness is profanely bantered. The stupid and brutish notion of the soul's sleeping after death, is, by some, hotly maintained; and its immateriality and immortality are exploded by others. The resurrection of the same body is represented as impossible; and a general judgment, nay, a particular time of men's appearing before God to give an account of what they have done in the body, is now a subject of ridicule; and the doctrine of the wicked being reserved for eternal torments, is, by many, set aside. This, without straining, nay, without amplifying the matter, is an account how things stand with us, as to matters of belief. What adds to our unhappiness is, many who do not run the aforesaid lengths, too much strengthen the party of the enemies of the truth, and too much weaken the hands of the real friends of the Christian cause, by representing these great and important doctrines as matters of mere abstruse speculation, and by branding all concern for them, as taking the Spirit's work out of his hand, or as breaking in upon Christian charity. Many act as if they valued more to be commended by an infidel, as men of little larger thought, and freer inquiry than their neighbours, than to have a testimony in the consciences of good Christians, who cannot but think that they are more concerned for their own things than they are for the things of God; and while they gain the good word of the enemies of the Gospel, they consider not how much grief they occasion to such as love the truth as it is in Jesus.

As matters are on a very bad footing with us, with respect to faith, if we impartially continue our survey we shall not find they are better with respect to *practice*. A declension in faith is always attended with disaffection to the practical duties, which are prescribed in the same divine oracles, that reveal the mysteries we are to believe. I cannot help thinking that some who would appear to be very eager advocates for the doctrine of grace, have done much harm to religion, by pretending that the law is of no use to such as are in Christ, and by discovering much want of temper, if they, at any time, hear the duties of practical godliness stated and pressed. Some have called discoursing on the power of godliness, on repentance, self-denial, and mortification, low stuff; and have been easy to hear of nothing but electing love and free grace. Such do harm to the

cause which they espouse and plead for, by going about to separate what God has joined together; it is certain, that they have greatly strengthened legal professors in their dislike of the doctrine of grace; not to mention the real disgrace they too often bring upon it, for they are not always found to be so circumspect in their dealings and behaviour, as they ought.

If we leave the before-mentioned persons, and look to others, it must be said, that practical religion runs lower among no sort of men, than *those* who hear little else pressed upon them. There never was less regard paid to the Lord's day, than is now; many, who do not run into all lengths of immorality, scruple not to make it a day of pleasure and recreation; and the negligence of professors, in attending on God, in the public worship of the sanctuary, is every day growing more flagrant: they despise the sacred provisions of Sion; and, though they are not arrived at such height of insolence, as to deny, in words, the obligation they lie under, to attend on public ordinances, yet, by their not countenancing the institutions of Christ with their presence, they show how little they regard his authority. Family religion is likewise greatly neglected; we frequently hear of many prayerless families, the heads of which should, as we might think, considering their profession, be ashamed of giving cause for such a complaint: and if men neglect public worship, and will not keep up family duty, it is scarce to be thought that they mind private religion; or that, if they perform secret devotions at all, they do it in any other than in a cold, formal, stiff manner. In short, the power of godliness is very much lost in the world. It must be owned, that great endeavours have been used, to bring professing Christians to a sense of their duty; general and concerted efforts have been made to impress their minds with a sense of the necessity they lie under, to offer up the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise in their families, and to attend on the public ordinances of the sanctuary; but we cannot say, that we see these attempts have been so successful as we could wish, and have desired: on the contrary, our desolation, with respect to practical religion, spreads as a mighty torrent, notwithstanding all the mounds which have been cast up to stop the course of it.

Since we have had so much talk of natural religion, and have had our ears almost stunned with the noise, that moral duties are of much greater importance than positive institutions, we cannot say that morality flourishes in the least. That Christian simplicity and godly sincerity in the conversation, for which the generation that is now gone off the stage were so remarkable, are not seen among such as have sprung up in their room: a new set of professors has started up, who, by their negligence, as to private and social duties, almost tempt us to think, that they know not the God of their fathers. Moral justice was

never at a lower ebb than it now is; and there were never such numbers of cheating pretenders to religion, who distress others, to maintain themselves in luxury, as are in our day.

We have had many tragical complaints of a narrow spirit and the want of Christian love; and it must be said, that the great duties of love and forbearance are too much forgotten. It has been an artifice by which some, who have not discovered the concern that might have been wished, for the faith once delivered to the saints, have made their way into the esteem of such as have more of affection than judgment, to engross to themselves the character of being men of charity; and many sentences of Scripture, which speak of that love which Christians should keep up to their brethren, or those who are friends to the truth, have been frequently used and inculcated, as if they expressed the treatment, we should give such as we are apprehensive are enemies to, and opposers of what we are persuaded is the true faith, revealed in the Holy Scriptures: we cannot but think, that, in this, a wrong construction is put on many texts. We are not to cast off pity; on the contrary, we are to show benevolence to the most erroneous, but we must not, we cannot believe that they, who oppose the doctrines we have learned from Scripture, have a title to be as much valued by us, as sincere searchers after truth, as they who stand up for the honour of our dearest Lord. But, to let that pass, we do not so much blame them who are loudest in their cry for charity, for excess of it, as we do for their want of it: we cannot see they act more charity, than such as they censure, as being narrow spirited. Indeed, if any person starts the most monstrous errors, we cannot but say, that they plead for all forbearance to be showed to him; but let a man once stand up in defence of what these persons do not pretend to deny to be their faith, we cannot see they will make the least allowance for what they count his defects, and which, according to their own large principles, they should pity and overlook; on the contrary, they scarce know how to vent their displeasure enough against him.

This is an imperfect account of the state of religion among us; and if there is any defect in it, it does not lie in this, that things are represented to be worse than they are, but rather in not setting forth the state of our affairs, in such black colours, as they really admit. When we see such increasing declensions, we cannot but say, that though we have a name to live, yet we are in a manner dead; and that though we keep up a profession of Christianity, we have, as to faith and practice lost our first love. Of these decays we ought to be sensible, otherwise we can never remember from whence we have fallen, repent of our sins, be watchful, or strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die; but shall go on further to provoke the King of the church to come upon us, when we least expect it, in a way of displeasure, and to remove our candlestick out of its place.

II. I shall inquire into the true causes of the *decay of practical religion* in our time.

All who make a profession of religion, are not concerned, as, we cannot but humbly apprehend, they ought to be, for the ravages which are daily made on our most holy faith, or on the doctrines of Christianity; but all who have any thing of a serious temper, seem to be alarmed at the great defection as to matters of practical religion. It is to be wished, it could be said, that all who see these declensions, were as sensible of the true causes of them; but, it is to be feared, many have not a right notion of what really lies at the bottom of our prevailing backslidings, and are for ascribing them to things which are so far from having a tendency to promote them, that they are the only things which are proper to prevent them. Some of the true causes of our great decays, are these following, and it is matter of sorrow that there is reason to mention them.

1. One great cause of the decay of practical religion, is the *too general contempt* which is cast upon the *important doctrines of the Gospel*, and on those who stand up in their defence against seducers, who endeavour to rob Christians of them. I am sensible, it has been often given out, that the people have heard so much of what some call matters of speculation, and points of dispute, that by this they have been taken off from minding the more important things which refer to practice: and it has been said, that whoever goes far into controversy, weakens practical religion. It is very difficult to see any force in these arguings: how engaging in controversy, in defence of points of belief, which are founded on the same divine authority, as the duties of practical religion, can weaken this, is hard to be conceived: nay, there is as much ground to censure us, if we launch into controversies, relating to the duties required of us; and then we must give up every thing which men take it in their heads to deny. Our obligations to keep the Sabbath, to worship God in public, to keep up family religion, to submit to baptism, to come to the table of the Lord, are controverted, and the maintaining of them will run us into as large a field of debate, as any doctrinal article. These afford questions and occasion disputes; yet such as are afraid of weakening practical religion by controversy, would scarcely give up these; so that we cannot think that it is bare controversy which is disliked, but the doctrines themselves, which are in controversy defended.

It has been a piece of advice given to us, who serve Christ in the work of the ministry, by such as we, on many accounts, value and regard; that sublime speculation, and abstruse controversies should not ordinarily be introduced into our sermons, for that these minister questions, rather than godly edifying: and they observe, that it is an easy matter to engage our warm hearers on subjects, which neither they nor we can fully understand; that this is the ready way to procure the regard

of those, who lay a mighty stress on their own opinions; but that their esteem will be purchased at too dear a rate, since, instead of promoting true religion, it will certainly destroy it; that where this zeal and contention are, there is strife, and every evil work: that though some may admire it for its shining lustre, yet fatal experience proves it to be a raging flame; and, where it breaks out, there is reason to fear that practical godliness will soon be consumed. It is not easy to say against what sort of men this counsel is leveled, it being couched in such general terms. If by avoiding sublime questions and abstruse controversies, nothing more is meant, than not introducing questions about the unrevealed mode of Scripture mysteries, and not bringing into sermons the whimsical attempts of vain and conceited projectors, to give clear and bright ideas how things can be, in matters that surpass our understanding, every wise man will fall in with it; for he will not think it worth his while to trouble himself to defend the dreams of bold intruders into things not seen, and idle pretenders to science, falsely so called: but if by abstruse controversies, and sublime speculations, are meant the controverted doctrine of the gospel, which have such a depth of mystery in them, that they cannot be fully comprehended, neither by preachers nor hearers, it sounds a little harsh to say, that when zeal for these breaks out, practical religion will be consumed; because, in fact, it has been seen, that as people have grown uneasy, at having these doctrines unfolded, their regard to practical religion has lessened. In the times of our fathers, when there were more pulpit skirmishes, as they are called, by way of contempt, which made sport for unbelievers, who banter, ridicule, and speak evil of they know not what, there was much more of real religion, than is now: nay, bad as the times are, it is seen, that such as are against moving the ancient landmarks, and pulling up the old barriers of truth, who love to have their own opinions, on which they lay a mighty stress, and that justly, because they have had a practical knowledge, how much they are for a Christian's comfort, stated, maintained, and defended, against the attempts of the enemy, are the persons who have practical religion most at heart, and who are most diligent in performing the duties of it. The far greater number of the Sabbath-breakers, the despisers of public worship, and the neglecters of family religion, are not to be found among those who hold fast the old doctrines, but among those who prate against creeds, confessions, and systems, and who are for paying no regard to points of doctrine.

Every one, who knows any thing of the present state of affairs, must be sensible this is a truth: and, indeed, it can hardly be otherwise; for if men are once connived at, in breaking their allegiance to Christ, in one respect, they will, on the same principles, assume to themselves a liberty to do it in



another, if it suits their fancies, and gratifies their corruptions. The same Scriptures declare, that, in the unity of the Godhead, there are three divine Persons; and that the Son is one with the Father in nature, and equal with him in perfections, though distinct in Person, which tell us, that we must keep the Sabbath, not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and pray always. When men hear, that the belief of a Trinity, which runs through the Scripture, is a mere speculative felicity of hitting the divine nature right, in some particular modes of thinking, and it is of no moment, whether they believe him who has their concerns in his hand, to be God, or a creature, a person, or a power, it is natural for them to conclude, that it is of as little importance whether they spend the Sabbath in public worship, and pray in their families, or not; seeing it is the same Scripture, which makes known points of doctrine, to avoid controversy they may as well give up a Scripture duty, to prevent contest with such as are of another mind, and to ward off the putting themselves to trouble. They who give up any truth, which the Scripture has revealed, are guilty of a breach of allegiance to Christ; and they are not exempted from this charge, by their retaining many things, which he has made known and commanded; because a man is as really, though not equally, a betrayer of Christ, who gives up one thing, which he has ordered to be retained, as he who throws up the whole of the Christian doctrine; just as a man who joins with others to attack his prince's guards, in order to destroy his person, who has opportunity to kill but one of his attendants, is as really a traitor, as if he had been able to have killed all about him, and to have murdered him at the same time: and none would believe him, if he were to say, that when he had killed one, he intended to do no more. When men give up a part of Christianity to please their own humour, or to keep in with its opposers, they will always be ready to give up all other parts of it, if it suits their interest; for it is impossible that a man, who shows no value for the Scripture account of Christ's person, incarnation, and satisfaction, can have any real regard to him, as the governor of his church, any further than it may be for his advantage to profess subjection to him. If a temptation offers, he will as much slight his institutions, as he is regardless what and who he is, and what he has done for sinners. On the whole, the little concern which many show for the great doctrines of the gospel, is a principal cause of the decay of practical religion, which we may all see, and ought greatly to lament.

2. One great cause of the decay of piety, is the *neglect* which has been of late, in *preaching Christ*. By preaching Christ, I do not mean haranguing upon some duties of natural religion, which are not contrary to his doctrines; this is an odd conceit about preaching Christ: thus the Pagans may be said to preach

Christ. Mahomet stuffed his Koran with many things taken from Scripture; at this rate, to preach up them, might enable a Christian to say, if he was among the infidels, that he preached up Mahomet, when he might not say a word about Mahomet's being a true prophet, which is the fundamental of that religion. Preaching of Christ does not lie in stating such duties of natural religion as might be picked up out of Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and Seneca, which are not entirely inconsistent with what we meet with in Scripture; yet it must be said of too many, who assume the title of Christian ministers, that if they preach Christ at all, it is in this way, only they state moral duties in a tedious dull manner, and without the smartness and nervousness for which some Pagan writers are remarkable.

If we take to us justly the title of preachers of Christ, we must instruct our hearers in the Scripture account of his person; if we are to make our great Master known to men, surely we must tell them, from the oracles of truth, who he is, and what he is. We must vindicate his real personality, or show him to be distinct from the Father in person, though one God with him, against such as make him only a name or power of God: we must in opposition to such as would reduce him to the rank of creatures, prove his supreme divinity, from his being called Jehovah and God, in an absolute sense; from his being declared to be one with the Father, and equal to him; from his having applied to him the highest titles of supremacy; from his being represented as necessarily existing, eternal, unchangeable, omniscient, immense, and almighty; from his being the Creator, the Preserver, Upholder, and End of all things, and from his receiving adoration: we must make known that he is God-man, or that he took into union with his divine person the whole human nature, consisting of a real body, and a rational soul, not an angelic or a super-angelic spirit; and must evince the necessity there was, that he should be God and man, in one person, that there might be infinite value in his merit, at the same time that he had a capacity to suffer: we must defend the truth of his miracles, by which he confirmed his doctrine, and the reality and the efficacy of his sufferings and death, by which he made full and proper satisfaction for the sins of the elect, and did not procure an uncertain precarious happiness for the whole world; and show the necessity there was for him to rise and revive, that he might demonstrate, that he had accomplished his work; and that he might ascend into heaven, and, having taken his seat at the right hand of God, might intercede for his people, in an authoritative way; and that he might make a more plentiful effusion of his Spirit upon them. When we thus show how he executes his office as a Priest, we must make him known in all his offices; or, as he is the great Prophet of the church, who has given his followers a full revelation of the mind of God, and

who savingly enlightens them, that they may receive the truth in love; and as he is the King of saints, who renews, rules, and governs them, who strengthens them for duty, and who assists them against enemies: we must persuade and press men to look to Christ, as dying for sin, to rely upon him alone for pardon of guilt, and for righteousness to justify them, without adding their imperfect duties to his infinite merit; and to depend on him for strength, to perform sincere obedience, to encounter enemies, to grow in grace, and to persevere in holiness, till, at last, he shall bestow eternal life: we must maintain that he is the Head of the church, who alone has the right to prescribe rules for worship, so that none must impose their inventions on his subjects; and that he is the person who is to judge the world in righteousness, so that he will appear a second time, in power and great glory, to raise the dead, to take cognizance of the actions of every creature that has sinned, to inflict fulness of torment on the rebel angels, to fix impenitent sinners in ever-during woe, and to place those, for whose sins he has satisfied, in everlasting blessedness.

We are not, in the course of our ministry, confined wholly to these subjects; we ought, at proper seasons, to insist upon the perfections of God, on the displays of his wisdom, power, and goodness, in the works of creation and providence; and on his various dispensations, with regard to the affairs of his church: we are to show the great depravity of men, by reason of the fall, and the great vanity they are guilty of, in seeking satisfaction in any thing short of the Most High; and as it was not the design of our Redeemer, though he fulfilled and abolished the law, as a covenant of works, to weaken the obligations his people lie under, to conform to it as a rule of life, we must make known to men the duties it requires, as they are incumbent upon us, whether we are in a private, social, or public capacity.— Though these things are not be wholly omitted, yet we must reckon it a great part of our work, to state, maintain, and defend the glorious doctrines of the blessed gospel, which relate to Christ, and what he has done for us, and which contain the foundation of our hope, as to a better world. Even when we press the duties of the law, we must acquaint men, that it is in Christ's strength only that they can perform them, and that it is absolutely necessary to be found practising them, in order to show that they are his disciples, and to express their gratitude to him for all his benefits.

If we consider what is the true notion of preaching Christ, and observe what has been the practice of many, we must say, there is the greatest truth in an observation, which has lately been made, that there are but few, in our days, who preach Christ, and few that regard him; and that the greatest number of preachers and hearers seem contented to lay him aside. It

is a great shame, and it should be matter of sorrow, that this is the truth of the case; but since it is the real truth, it ought to be spoken: and since matters are so, can we wonder that practical religion is neglected, when Christ is so little preached? Of what avail is it to tell a man, that he must be serious in his behaviour, and circumspect in his walk, that he must beware of the deceitfulness of sin, and that he must be constant in worship, if he is not informed in whose strength he must engage in duty, and on whom he must rely for aid against sin, and is left in the dark, as to the end he ought to have in view, in performing what religious service God requires? Men ought to be acquainted, that their performances will never recommend them to God as a Judge, but yet that it is necessary for them to obey the will of their Creator, that they may evidence that they have believed in Christ for righteousness; and, till they are convinced of the truth of these things, they will never sincerely regard practical religion: they will either abound in uncommanded rigours and austerities, in order to make God their debtor; or they will soon grow weary of the external part of religion, and look upon it to be mere bodily labour. No duties can be performed with true spiritual pleasure without faith in Christ; and there is no obedience that can be styled evangelical holiness, but what is performed in his strength. If then Christ is left out in preaching, as declamations and harangues, which are made about inward and outward piety, must needs be extremely low and lame, so the practice of those whose unhappiness it is to sit under such teaching, will be very short of coming up to what the Scripture calls holiness. To tell a man of the noble nature of the Christian virtues, of the beauty of practical godliness, and of the excellence of gospel morality, without informing him in whose strength he must act, will have as little efficacy on him, to make him regulate himself according to the admirable model of duty, which is laid down in Scripture, as a long discourse on the desirableness and benefits of health would be of advantage to promote the recovery of a sick man, if he was not directed to use such means as might suit his case.

3. The ascribing too much to the power and the performances of *fallen man*, and too little to the *free grace of God*, and to the *righteousness of Christ*, has always been attended with looseness, as to matters of practice, and is one principal cause of the ravages made on piety among us. When God fixed upon the method of man's recovery, we may be sure he would never promote his salvation, in a way injurious to his divine perfections, neither would he set one attribute at variance with another: he purposed to deliver sinners, in a way in which his absolute sovereignty, his free grace, his inexorable justice, his unsearchable wisdom, his unchangeable truth, his unspotted holiness, his almighty power, his immense goodness, and his rich mercy, might all be equally glorified; and this is by the

salvation of his elect by Christ Jesus. The ends which he had in view, in appointing his Son to be the Redeemer of men, and consequently in publishing the glad tidings of great joy, which the everlasting gospel contains, were to depress man as fallen, to exalt Christ, and to promote holiness: when persons then run contrary to God's designs, and strive to exalt the power and the worth of the fallen creature, and to depress the almighty and all-sufficient Saviour, it is no wonder that they are not concerned as they ought to be, to promote practical godliness, because they endeavour to separate what God will have to be joined together. When men are against exalting free grace, and honouring Christ, it is a jest for them to pretend to be for promoting piety, because, if they really loved God, they would have an equal regard to all the things he had in view, in saving sinners by Christ: as they are not much concerned for one part of his design, it cannot be thought that they act from a principle of real love to him; and without this, though they may come under a moral reformation, as to gross sins, it cannot be thought that they will practise true holiness, which the holy Scriptures require in all such as hope to see the Lord.

It has been matter of fact, that whenever a run has been made on the Gospel doctrine of justification, by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, under the idle pretence of its having a tendency to discourage good works, there has been a visible declension in holiness, among such as would appear most concerned to promote, by this, the cause of piety. I know this is a tender point, and a thing which some do not care to hear of; therefore, that I may not give offence, by saying what might be counted harsh, though it might not be so in reality, I shall choose to give my sense of this matter, not in my own words, but in those of a divine of great judgment, unbiassed integrity, and eminent piety, who now rests from his labours, and whose praise is in the churches; they are these: \* "When the doctrine of justification by faith prevails, the church prospers; but when it falls, the church falls with it; when it is subverted and adulterated, the purity of the doctrine of the gospel, in other things, cannot be preserved; when it is laid aside, and justification by works is brought into its room, a flood of errors comes in with it. This error is the inlet of licentiousness, and destroys the vital part of holiness; instead of furthering good works, as the favourers of it pretend, it is a barren soil wherein nothing grows but the briars and thorns of evil works. The papacy is a sad instance of this. The generality of the members of the church of Rome are such as have banished from them the very shadow of sobriety, and wallow in the channel of unbounded lust; their strictest devotees, who boast that they can merit not only for

\* Mr. Richard Taylor, in his *Scripture-Doctrine of Justification*, p. 204—207, in the second volume of his works.

themselves, but for others, are more like mad men, than men actuated by grace or reason. What are their works, but heaps of idolatry and superstitious fooleries? Christ will only be a strength to them that trust in him for righteousness; they that will not have him for their righteousness, shall not have him for their strength to enable them to resist temptations, to mortify sin and corruption, and to bring forth the fruits of holiness.

“The error of justification by works, brings judgments from God upon a people that give it any countenance, and forsake the truth. This is verified in the French churches; they receded from the first reformers in the doctrine of justification; this is what the most guilty of them will deny, but it was so evident, that the Papists took notice of it. The French Protestants did not zealously stick to the doctrine of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ, as it was transmitted and conveyed down to them, by our reformers; and what followed? A decay of piety, and a corruption of manners which provoked God to scatter and cast them off. I do not speak this to insult over them, but to move us to fear; we have lost the truth in this nation, and we every day more and more lose the Spirit of holiness. What a sensible declension is there in the national English church, since the doctrinal articles which have the spirit of our first reformers in them have been cried down, instead of being preached up by them who yet subscribe to the truth of them! Are not they, who separate from the national church, grown much worse since the new Methodists have found a grateful welcome amongst them? When truth is lost, holiness will not stay behind.

“We have a great noise made about works, and yet there was never less working than there is now among us; which shows that men do not cry up works from a love to holiness, but only to favour a faction, and to gain credit to their own corrupt opinions. If God does not send forth his light and his truth among us, and if he does not awaken us to remember from whence we are fallen, that we may recover ourselves, we can expect nothing, but that our sun will set in a cloud; and then, as we shall have our lot to be punished after others, so our punishment will be sorer and severer than theirs. What is the spring of a believer’s comfort, is now become the ground of contention among us. Much has been preached about justification by faith in Christ, and many useful books have been published concerning it; yet there is great darkness among professors about it, and, as they are ignorant of this truth, so they are barren in good works.”

These remarks were the result of careful observation, near forty years ago; and the time that has run out since, has only afforded us more opportunity to see with how much skill and judgment they were made. We have gone on to cast more contempt, every day, both upon the glorious doctrine of man’s

salvation being entirely owing to the free grace of God, and on the important point of justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed; and the great pretence has been, men should not hear so much of the privileges, which belong to such as are in Christ, as of the duties required of them, lest they abuse the gospel, and run into Antinomianism. If we either neglect to show the necessity for relying on Christ for a justifying righteousness, or to evince the need of practising holy duties, we go out of God's way, and cannot expect his blessing: accordingly we see, that crying up of sincere obedience, to the lessening a regard to Christ's righteousness, has been followed with an increase of formality and deadness in duty, and with a great neglect of it; so that the following advice of the author, whose words have been quoted, is very proper for us to regard: "Let us pray, that Christianity among us may return to its proper channel, which is this; when men expect the whole of their salvation from Christ, and yet strive to be as fruitful in their lives, as if they expected to be justified by their good works. The greater sense any one has of the free grace of God, the more precise and exact he will be, in the duties of every relation."

4. It is to be feared, that the decay of piety is to be attributed, in some measure, to the too general neglect of *instructing young persons in the principles of true Christianity*, and to the contempt which has been, of late years, cast upon those judicious and useful forms of sound words, which have been of great advantage to furnish men with just notions of the doctrines which are revealed in Scripture. Instructing of youth in a catechetical way, has been an ancient practice in the Christian churches; there is sufficient ground for it to be gathered from the Scripture, and it has been a method which Christ has owned, and greatly blessed. It is a duty incumbent on Christians to instruct their children, and all others who are under their care, in the doctrinal knowledge of those truths, which they have learned from the Scripture, which have been the food of their souls, from the time they were renewed by divine grace, and the comforts of which they have felt, in all their soul-exercises. And, besides this, it is exceedingly profitable for young persons to be taught the principles of religion,\* in a public manner, by the dispensers of the gospel, who can, with prudence and caution, engage in this work. It must be owned, that all the instruction we can give, will not bring persons to receive the truth in the love of it, if they are left without the saving illuminations of the Holy Spirit: it may enlighten the head, but of itself it will not change the heart. However it is of very great advantage, in many respects, for those who are in their more tender years, to be instructed in the doctrines taught, and in the duties required in Scripture. If they have

\* See Mr. Hurrion's Sermon on the good of early instruction, p. 11—24.

any good thing in them towards the Lord God of Israel, or are under religious impressions, it must be very pleasing and profitable to them, to have the glorious mysteries of the gospel unfolded, and proved from Scripture, and to have the duties required of them, in every relation, to be laid before them, from the oracles of the living God. If they are left to themselves, yet by being taught practical duties, they may be the more civilized, may be laid under a greater moral restraint, and may be made more useful members of society. We cannot tell how soon the Spirit of God may work upon such, as, at the present, are in a state of nature; and then they will always find it of vast advantage, to have been instructed in the Christian doctrines; they will feel the power of the truths, of which they only had a speculative notion before, and will increase in knowledge, as well as grow in grace. When a man receives the truth in the love of it, he will rejoice, if his case is such, that he has not his faith to seek, as to the system of it, and that he is not at a loss about his duty, as to knowing the matter of it. Such as have been nourished up, as the great evangelist Timothy was, 1 Tim. iv. 6, "in the words of faith and good doctrine," have always proved the wisest and the most useful Christians. They know their Master's will, as to faith and practice; and they are most careful to come to it. It has been an observation, and it is very just, and confirmed by experience, that such as have been made partakers of the grace of God, who never were instructed in the doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ, have been often very warm, sincere, and scrupulous professors of Christianity; but they have been generally either hot and unsettled, or fond of advancing only one truth, and uneasy to hear of any thing else; or ready to admire all preaching, which is suited to move the lower passions, or else prone to run into enthusiasm. On the other hand, when such are converted, as have been brought by instruction to have a good measure of knowledge of the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of our holy religion, they have been more steady in their adherence to right principles, and more regularly uniform in their conduct. We cannot but say, that there has of late been too great a neglect, as to the instructing of youth; and we find the sad consequence of this, in the ignorance, profaneness, and conceit, which we may observe in the rising generation.

It has been a prevailing custom among us, who separate from the national establishment, to make use of the Shorter Catechism of the venerable Assembly of Divines, who met at Westminster, in instructing youth. Of that noble composure it may very justly be said, that for clearness of thought, for comprehending a great deal in a small compass, for treating of the glorious doctrines of the gospel with accuracy, care, and caution, and for speaking of them, in the most just and nervous way, there are few human composures which can be said to exceed it. They



who have gone before us, thought themselves happy in having such an excellent form of sound words to help them in instructing such as were under their inspection. But there is a generation now upon the stage, who defy their fathers as precedents, because they will not come up with them in honesty, zeal, and self-denial. To declaim directly against a composure, which had a testimony in the consciences of all serious Christians, would not have answered the end of such as were weary of the truths summed up in it; therefore few who have run into neutrality and lukewarmness, have ventured to say that they looked upon it to comprehend a heap of false opinions. They have been more artful in their management, they have told such as would listen to them, that the words of Scripture are certainly the best; that catechisms should be drawn up in the expressions of the inspired writers; that if we pay a regard to human forms, to creeds, confessions, and systems of divinity, framed by men subject to mistake, we deny the sufficiency of Scripture, and set the performances of fallible creatures on a level with the words of the infallible God. By these insinuations, they who have used them have led many off from all regard to truth and practical religion. If they had cried out against any summary of principles apprehended to be Christian, as containing points inconsistent with Scripture, none would have blamed them, for going according to their light, though we might have taken the liberty to have counted their light darkness; but for men to abstract from the consideration, whether the creeds and catechisms, which have been in use, are agreeable to Scripture or no, and gravely and solemnly to talk against them, and to run them down, merely because they are human composures, as incroachments on the sufficiency of Scripture, is what contributes exceedingly to the increase of infidelity. All things composed by men ought to be tried by the Scripture standard; if they are not agreeable to the oracles of the living God, let them be rejected with contempt and disdain; but if they contain just accounts of what lies scattered in different parts of the book of God, it can answer no end to run them down as human forms, except it be to disparage that religion, on the side of which the composers of them were. It is said by some, who have borrowed the pretence from the Socinians and the Jesuits, that it is sufficient for men to assent to the words of Scripture; and perhaps it might be so, if there were no knaves in the world, and no wolves in sheep's clothing in the church. Christians do not use the caution they ought, if they only inquire, whether a man professes to own the Bible to contain his religion; they are principally concerned to be satisfied how he, who would thrust himself into their esteem, understands the words of that which they take for their rule of faith, and for their directory in practice; that they may judge whether he is a disciple of Christ or not

In former days, when the excellent summaries of Christian faith and practice were valued and highly esteemed, because it was concluded they were founded on Scripture, practical religion flourished. But what a disagreeable turn have matters taken, since we have heard them run down, because they were drawn up by men? Some, who have heard their guides rail at them, and ridicule them, as human forms, and the impositions of men, have been induced to think, that all the points laid down and summed up in them, were human inventions, and they have gone further than their leaders intended they should. They have not only deserted the doctrines which their teachers hated, but they have cast off all regard to practical duties, and have manifested the utmost contempt of public worship, and of the Sabbath. It is greatly to be wished, that some who have been most violent in railing against standing up for controverted points, in declaiming against creeds, confessions and catechisms, in abusing all open declarations as to matters of faith, and in recommending licentiousness and lukewarmness, under the false names of liberty and charity, would think what they have been doing. They have thrown down the banks, which were raised to keep out infidelity and error; and, seeing they have let these come in like a raging sea, it is not to be wondered at, if they are not all able to keep the tide out, by opposing the palms of their hands to it.

5. The great cause of all the present corruptions in practice, is the contempt which has, for many years, been cast on the *Holy Spirit and his operations*. It has been too common for the Holy Spirit to be left out in preaching upon duty; and it has been too general a thing to neglect putting such as are pressed to regard the salvation of their souls, on keeping up in their minds a continual sense of their being able to do nothing aright, without his aid and assistance. Moral suasion has been talked of, as being fit in itself to bring men to a sense of their duty; and such as are for looking up for assistance, for aid, and for consolation to the Holy One, are vilified, as persons frenzied and delirious. We have grieved and offended the Spirit of grace; and he, in a great measure, is withdrawn and gone; and, since he is absent, we find that ordinances are of little use to them that, in a formal way, converse in them; consequently it is no wonder that he does not regard the despisers of ordinances, or them who cast open and avowed contempt on those sacred provisions, which it is his office to bless.

It may, with too much justice, be said, that never was the Holy Spirit more contemned, and consequently more provoked, for a long series of time, by any that have kept up an external profession of Christianity, than he has been among us of late years. His Deity is by many denied, and endeavours are used to reduce him to the rank of creatures, nay, to make him created by a creature; and so opinionated persons, who would affect to

be dictators, take upon them to prescribe it as proper, to worship him directly only occasionally, as prudence and expedience may require, and not to bind it upon our own consciences, or upon others, as a necessary thing: his real personality is opposed by some, and we are told, by projectors, that he is only a divine power personified by some idioms of speech; and our Lord's promise, which contained in it, what he designed for the comfort of all Christians, since the heavens have received him, as to his bodily presence, that the Spirit of truth should come, or that the person of his Spirit should make a more plentiful effusion of his gifts upon them, is made nothing of, by this bold figment, that our Lord described a divine power by a strong propopoeia, and a noble allegory, as a messenger sent from God: it is hard to say how the blessed Spirit, the Comforter of the elect of God, could well be more affronted, than in being treated thus: great provocations are offered him, by such as do not profess to run the length of denying his personality and divine glory; his work, as a quickening, renewing Spirit, is denied, and what can only be brought about in the soul of a sinner, by his efficiency, in enlightening the understanding, bowing the will, and purifying the affections, is, by many, ascribed either entirely, or in part, to the free will of man. How has praying by the Spirit been profanely ridiculed by one sort of men! And what has been the effect? Fervent prayer has been, in a manner, lost among them, and they are given up to a lifeless formality: but these are not the persons with whom we are more immediately concerned. To come nearer home: what contempt is cast on the Spirit's motions, as a Convincer, an Instructor, and a Comforter? How is his sealing up believers to the day of redemption, or witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God, treated with banter and grimace? How are all that profess to depend on his conduct exposed, as being under the power of enthusiasm, by many who profess Christianity? What sneering folly do some demure formalists show, when a word is said of his enabling us to will and to do, of his good pleasure? What is the melancholy consequence of all this? The Comforter is much withdrawn. Hence it arises, that the work of conversion is very much at a stand; few are now seen inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward; and they who have long professed religion, have gray hairs increasing upon them, and are under great decays and declensions. There is no question to be made, but that, in these times of sad degeneracy, the Spirit revives some serious, zealous Christians, with his strong consolations; yet it must be said, that he does not make the preaching of the gospel so effectual for instruction, edification, and comfort, to great numbers, as he formerly did. Sinners may now be alarmed with the thunders of mount Sinai, and be allured with the still small voice from the palaces of Zion, and yet they continue fearless and stupid,

senseless and unaffected. Professing Christians now often sit before God as his people, and are found in external performance of ordinances, and yet go away as dull and heavy, as full of formality and deadness, as if they had not been engaged in them. The reason is, the Holy Spirit does not accompany the word preached with his blessing, and does not clothe his ordinances with power; he withdraws from us, whose presence was the glory of our assemblies; and he leaves us to feel the effects of our mad ingratitude, in grieving him, in slighting his motions, and in casting contempt on his person and operations: and if the Spirit departs, as a Spirit of conviction and comfort, it is no wonder that we have reason to complain of our leanness and barrenness under the enjoyment of the best means.

## APPLICATION.

1. Since we are forced to say, if we will be impartial, that we are under great decays, as to practical religion, let us endeavour to have a *deep sense* of our declensions, and of the *true causes* of them. We have often been told, that some reasons why religion is weakened, are these: the people are amused too much with speculative doctrines, and with disputes, and are taught to pay an unwarrantable regard to human forms and decisions; and it is very likely that some have worked themselves up to a belief of these insinuations; but there is matter of fact to be set against such idle surmises. Wherever the truths of the gospel have been most preached, in their purity, and where the professors of Christianity have been most cautious, as to giving them up, there has a regard to strict serious religion most prevailed. It may be said, that decays prevail among all sorts now; but it must be averred, that they who have the highest notions about the importance of the controverted doctrines of the gospel, and who express their value for those forms of sound words, which state them safely, are the persons among whom practical godliness flourishes most. We should strive then to be sensible of the true causes of our spiritual decays; for unless we know from what they proceed, we cannot remember from whence we have fallen, we cannot rightly repent of our backsliding, and we cannot do our first works; and, unless we do these things, we shall only grow worse and worse, and shall every day offer new provocations to the great King of the church; and, if we go on to stir up his displeasure afresh, his patience may be tired out, and he may come upon us, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, more suddenly than we may expect, and more severely than we may imagine.

Let us, when we are sensible of the declensions which prevail among us, examine what we have done to offend God: let us not be wholly taken up in accusing others, but let every man

among us smite upon his breast, and say, What have I done towards promoting a general declension? Let us search into all the secret chambers of imagery in our hearts; and, if we find any idol of jealousy erected, let us immediately cast it down, and destroy it: if, upon trying our spirits, we find we have done any thing to provoke God, let us abhor ourselves for it; let us be deeply humbled, and really contrite for it, and let us forsake it, with true repentance; let us show noble examples of defensible singularity, in running counter to general corruption; let us stand up for the truths of the gospel, when it is fashionable to run them down; let us worship God according to the pattern given in his word, when it is too common to offer strange fire on his altar; let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, when many leave the courts of Sion to follow their pleasures; let our houses resound with the voice of prayer, when those of others are without having the morning and evening sacrifice offered up in them; let us be shining examples of holiness and purity, and stand at a distance from insincerity, when others abound in dissoluteness and acts of fraud: let us bewail the sins of others, which we cannot reform: when the herd of ungodly sinners go on, without fear, to make void the law, when atheism, deism, and error, come in like floods, when iniquity abounds, and profaneness rides in triumph, and when professors have lost their first love, let us be among the number of them, who mourn over the abominations which too much prevail; let us wrestle in prayer with God the Holy Spirit, that he would not depart from us, but that he would still govern in our hearts, and fill our assemblies: let us, with fervency, cry, Come, Holy Ghost, eternal God, look down on the languishing state of the Christian interest among us; when Atheism and Deism break in upon us, as a raging sea, say thou, "Hitherto shall you come, and no further, and here shall your proud waves be staid;" when errors and heresies rush in like a flood, lift thou up a standard against them; cause the light of truth to shine forth, like the sun in its full strength, to scatter the fogs and mists of error; kindle the love of professors that waxes cold; inflame them with a pious zeal for the truth; restore a spirit of peace and true moderation; check that profaneness that rolls in like a mighty torrent; cause holiness to run down our streets as a river, and righteousness to glide through our land, like a peaceful stream: be to us a refreshing dew; cause our wilderness and our solitary places to be glad, and our desert to rejoice, and blossom as the rose; shed thy benign influences upon us; that we may grow as the lily, that we may revive as the corn, that we may be fruitful as the vine, that our beauty may be as the olive tree, and that we may strike down our roots, spread forth our branches, and rise in a graceful towering height, like the cedar: be thou, O Comforter, our glory, and our defence

abundantly bless the provision of Sion; endue the ministers of the gospel with righteousness, and clothe the ordinances of the sanctuary with power; be thou in the midst of us, and then we shall not be called, Forsaken and Desolate, neither shall it be said of us, that the glory is departed, but the name whereby we shall be called, shall be JEHOVAH-SHAMMAH, *the Lord is there.*

2. Since a defection from the faith of the gospel lies at the root of all our abominations, let us be *zealous for the truth, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.* In this day of blasphemy and rebuke, lukewarmness and indifference, we may expect to have many to weaken our hands, and occasion us sorrow of heart; but we know little of the state of things among us, if we expect to have very many to afford us help, when we are engaged in the cause of the Lord against the mighty. However, this ought not to move us from our duty; for Christ the Lord of Hosts is with us, when we plead for his honour and his truth, and, if our labours are not crowned with success, we have done our duty, we have the testimony of a good conscience, and we have delivered our souls. Our blessed Lord declared, that in the declining church of Sardis he had a few names, who had not defiled their garments, who should walk with him in white, for they were worthy. Let us be among the happy few, who are valiant for the truth in the earth, that when we appear before our great Master, he may say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter you into my joy; you shall walk before me in the white attire of innocence; you have been faithful to my cause, I will grace your brows with the diadems of immortality." We should consider that it is the noblest of causes in which we are engaged; to contend for our civil liberties against tyrants, and to strive for our spiritual privileges against impostors and persecutors is an honourable contest; but this is not what we are called to at present; we are concerned in matters of vastly greater importance to the well-being of our souls, though perhaps not to the quiet of our lives, or the securing our worldly interest: we contend for the supreme honour of God, as the Ruler of the world, and as the universal Lawgiver and Judge, against such as would set up moral fitnesses independent of him, and would not be reckoned to be made for him, or to be accountable to him. We strive for the perfection of Scripture against such as would make natural light, in our corrupt state, a perfect rule. We maintain, that Christ and the Holy Spirit are proper persons, against such as represent them to be powers, attributes, or mere names. We plead for their divine glories against such as would reduce them to the rank of creatures. We stand up for the absoluteness and immutability of God's decrees, against such as would make him dependent on the creature, and alterable in his purpose. We appear in defence of the infinite value of Christ's satisfaction,

and the perfection of his righteousness, against such as would put their obedience in his room, or tack the shreds of their crippled duties to the robe of salvation he has provided. We stand up for efficacious grace, and the power of the Spirit, against those who plead for man's free will; and for the final progress of believers in holiness, against them that would insinuate that such as Christ died for may be lost. We contend for holiness against such as abuse the doctrine of grace and turn it into wantonness; and for the perfection of the law against such as would have it abrogated, or to be of no use. We argue for the activity of the soul after death, for the resurrection of the body, and for a general judgment, against such as would make man cease to be, sleep in the grave, live always without his body, and not be accountable for his actions. This is the honourable service in which we are engaged; and can such poor unworthy creatures as we are, have a post of greater dignity? Let us then be never slothful or negligent, but let us contend earnestly for the truth. We are commanded in Scripture to do so; therefore, if we are by some blamed for infringing on peace, let us not regard so senseless a calumny; and if others accuse us of taking the Spirit's work out of his hand, let us pity them for putting so daring an affront on Christ, who has commanded us to strive for his truth, and forgive them for throwing out such a vile abuse against us. Let us never be weary of well doing; but the more opposition we meet with, as good soldiers of Christ, the more let us contend for the honour of our exalted Master; let us always fight under the banner of the great Captain of our salvation; let us use no weapons but what we fetch from the armoury of God, and let us leave the issue to him whose cause we plead; and, for our encouragement, let us consider, that he, under whose conduct we strive, will support us in our difficult warfare, and will, after we have sweat in the field of battle, as long as he has determined, give us a quiet discharge, and will bring us to the deathless realms of joy, where the noise of discord will cease, where we shall see our Redeemer as he is, and where with angels and archangels, we shall for ever praise and adore him.

To the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, three divine Persons, and the one God, be supreme honour, glory, and power ascribed, in all the churches, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

THE END.

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